DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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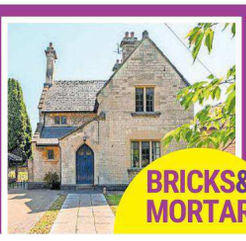
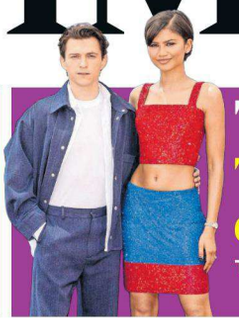


BRICKS&MORTAR

Mortgage v Rent
Which is cheaper?



Tomdaya!
The billion dollar couple

Times2

You're the best in world, boss told professor in plagiarism row

Tom Ball

Professor Jason Arday's boss at Cambridge described him as "the best in the world" in his field and gave him her "full support" when two academics raised detailed concerns about his work shortly after his appointment.

Professor Hilary Cremin, head of the faculty of education at Cambridge, was presented with evidence of Arday's alleged plagiarism in May 2023 by two academics.

Two months earlier Cremin had welcomed Arday to his new role in a BBC programme about his achievement in becoming Cambridge's youngest black professor, saying: "We are so lucky to have you. You are the best in the world in terms of the research that you do."

The concerns were raised by Dr David Harris, an academic at Plymouth Marjon University who had been reviewing Arday's work as part of a research project, and Professor Martyn Hammersley, a sociologist at Open University whom Harris had asked to review.

Emails seen by The Times show that Cremin responded to them by stating that she had held a meeting with Arday regarding the article in question, which had been published in 2018, and that after the meeting Arday had decided to "take the article down from the journal online platform in order to address concerns and re-upload it".

She went on to write that during the meeting "Arday spoke movingly about his ongoing experiences of direct and indirect racism, and the conditions that he was living in whilst the 2018 article was being prepared (in 2016). At this time he was early career and living away from home whilst dealing with significant health issues."

She said that though the university took allegations of plagiarism seriously, "we remain immensely proud of Arday's achievements and scholarship,

Continued on page 5

Fraud alert over loans to foreign students

- Fifth are now taken by non-UK citizens
- British taxpayer on hook for unpaid billions

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

About one in five student loans are now being given to non-British citizens, which risks costing the taxpayer billions of pounds a year in unpaid debt.

Research has found that in the past year foreign students received about £4 billion in tuition fees and maintenance loans, about 20 per cent of the total lending under the scheme.

The vast majority went to EU citizens, with one in 20 of all first-time student loans going to Romanians alone, amid concerns within the government that the scheme is open to fraud.

Critics have warned that the increase will fuel unpaid student loan debt with figures showing that foreign students are about 25 per cent less likely to repay their loans than their British counterparts, meaning that UK taxpayers face losing between £1.2 billion and £2.2 billion each year.

Student loans are not normally available to citizens of other countries studying in the UK — instead they are expected to fund their fees and living accommodation themselves. But there are exemptions for EU citizens or their relatives who qualify under the post-Brexit citizenship deal struck after the UK left the European Union.

This means that those with settled status are entitled to claim student finance. In the past 12 months more than 36,000 people have successfully applied for settled status, along with 30,000 family members of those already granted it.

Figures from the Student Loans Company show that of the 239,000 foreign citizens in receipt of loans, about 195,000 have settled status under the citizenship scheme. In the past decade the percentage of student loans being given to non-UK students has increased from 10.2 to 19.3 per cent.

The Conservative MP Neil O'Brien, who collated the figures from parliamentary questions and freedom of information requests, said he was concerned that the post-Brexit scheme was being exploited. He said, despite the deadline to apply for settled status passing five years ago, the Home Office was continuing to grant late applications.

"In the past 12 months alone, around 66,000 completely new applicants gained residency via this scheme, five years after the deadline," he said.

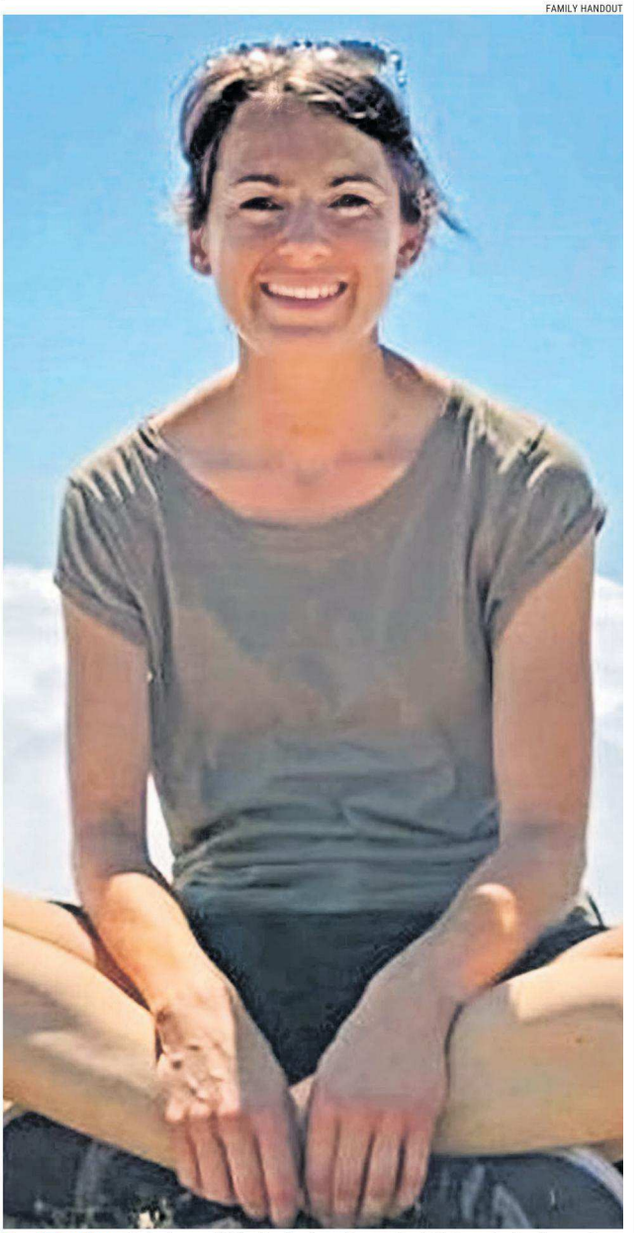
"Why is the Home Office allowing these implausibly late claims, and on what basis are they still being granted?"

O'Brien, who is head of policy for the Conservatives, said he believed there was a link between the rise in the number of student loans being handed out to foreign students and the continuing claims for settled status.

"My worry is that too many of these people will leave and not repay, or are getting the loan to top up their income while mainly working and doing a bit of studying," he said. "If we stop the flow of

Continued on page 2

FAMILY HANDOUT



Family's tribute **Relatives of Elisabeth-Jane Ross, the Edinburgh charity worker whose body was found in a suitcase in Athens, said they would remember her as a kind and selfless person who dedicated her life to helping people.** Page 7

No 10 aides show blokey Burnham the red card

Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

Andy Burnham has been told to tone down his "blokeish" videos by No 10's social media experts.

Team Burnham are receiving daily reports from the unit, which includes experts in data and social media analytics. Last week they advised the prime minister to limit the number of references to football and the pub in an attempt to appeal to a broader audience.

The team, which was created under Sir Keir Starmer's premiership, monitors Burnham's personal accounts, including the sentiment of replies.

A video of Burnham and John Healey, the chancellor, rating bar snacks to highlight a business rates cut for hospitality venues, was viewed more than five million times on X. Burnham has also regularly referenced football, his love of Everton and pints in his social media content. A source told The Times that the team "have cautioned against some of the content, advising to tone down some of the blokiness, such as the bar snacks stunt. He is a strong communicator but it's about balance."

The Cabinet Office is recruiting about 50 social media staff for the Government Media Unit (GMU). The unit is overseen by David Dinsmore, the civil service director for government communications and former editor of The Sun. A source familiar with his plans said he wanted to drive users towards central UK government social media accounts in an attempt to increase overall engagement.

Content produced by the GMU has been seen by 25 per cent of the population in the past 18 months. Departmental accounts reach just 2 per cent. The Cabinet Office said no decision had been made on the final size of the GMU.

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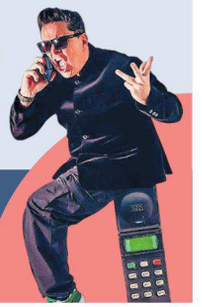
News

Today's highlights

7am **Anna Turley**, minister for border security and asylum
7.45am **Helen Whately**, shadow work and pensions secretary
8.35am **Jim Boyce**, former senior vice-president of Fifa
10.45pm The comedian **Dom Joly**, right, on his new tour and the 25th anniversary of *Trigger Happy TV*
2pm **Sally Alington**, a close friend of the Kercher family, who has started a petition to cancel Amanda Knox's Edinburgh Fringe show



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TIMESRadio

TODAY'S EDITION

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Sacked Bake Off boss suing for breach of contract
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The Ukrainian plot to sink the Russian economy

Kyiv is facing escalating missile attacks and the country is out of interceptor missiles to stop them. But behind the scenes, Ukraine has been plotting to bring down the Russian economy by targeting its largest online shop.

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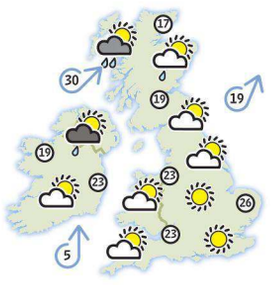

Showery rain in northern and western Scotland. Sunny spells elsewhere. **Full forecast, page 57**

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Switch-off may leave millions in countryside without TV

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

Labour has been warned that ending the terrestrial television network within the next decade could leave millions of rural households paying more to watch TV, or unable to watch it at all.

Campaigners have urged ministers to delay any decision to end Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), which delivers Freeview to homes via rooftop aerials, until at least 2044. They argue that the government's figures show broadband and mobile coverage in the countryside is too weak to support the move.

The government's Future of Rural England report, published last month, promised to place rural communities "at the heart" of policymaking by requiring Whitehall departments to assess the impact of policies on the countryside from the outset.

Broadcast 2040+, a coalition campaigning to retain universal free-to-air television, has written to Jenny Riddell-Carpenter, a minister in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and former chair of Labour's Rural Research Group, urging her to make the future of DTT an early test of the government's commitment to rural-proofing. The group wants ministers to retain the terrestrial television network until at least 2044, and carry out a formal rural impact assessment before deciding whether to end the service as early as 2034.

The government is consulting on whether to close DTT at the end of 2034 and deliver television over broadband or retain the network until 2044.

Campaigners argue that large parts of rural England are not yet equipped for the transition. They said government figures showed only 66 per cent of rural residential premises have access to gigabit-capable broadband, compared with 93 per cent in urban areas.

About 21,000 rural properties in England still lack access to a decent broadband connection, while only 63 per cent of rural premises receive indoor 4G coverage from every mobile operator, compared with 96 per cent in urban areas. About 2 per cent have no indoor 4G coverage from any operator.

Broadcast 2040+ said ending the terrestrial television network before those issues are solved would force many households to potentially buy expensive broadband subscriptions, replace functional televisions or buy additional equipment to continue receiving channels currently available for free via an aerial. Others living in poorly connected areas could lose access to television altogether, they warned.

The group also pointed to the demographics of rural England, where 27 per cent of people are aged 65 or older, compared with 18 per cent in urban areas outside London.

A spokesman for Broadcast 2040+ said: "Ending digital terrestrial television before universal connectivity exists would embed the digital divide into the future of television."

A government spokesperson said "there is a strong case for a long-term transition to IPTV [internet protocol television], but no decisions have been made. The purpose of the media green paper is to gather views from across the sector and the public before any final decisions are taken. We are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind as TV viewing increasingly moves online. Any future transition would only proceed once we are confident the right safeguards, infrastructure and support are in place so that everyone can continue to access television affordably and with confidence."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Loans to foreign students

new EU settled status claims, the flow of EU student loans is likely to dry up."

This year Bridget Phillipson, then education secretary, promised to crack down on franchised colleges that had the power to award degrees on behalf of universities. Experts say the colleges are being exploited by students who sign up for the courses to claim the loans before dropping out with no intention of repaying the money.

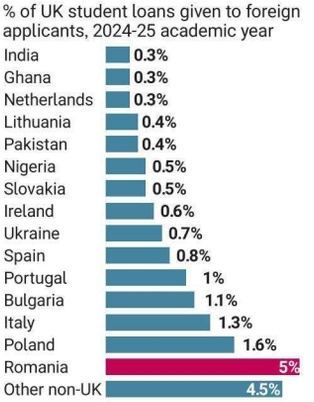
There has also been growing pressure on the government to relax the repayment terms facing UK graduates amid growing anger at punitive interest rates. This week more than 120 MPs and peers wrote to the chancellor asking him to carry out an "urgent review" of the student loan repayment system.

They say that the system under which graduates have to repay 9 per cent of their income above a certain threshold is an "unsustainable and unfair financial burden". Lucy Powell, the education secretary, said last week that the issue was at the "top of my in-tray".

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said: "We have strict eligibility requirements for student loans — nobody who lives outside of the UK can apply for or receive a loan. Anyone leaving the UK must continue to repay what they owe."

Lending to the world

% of UK student loans given to foreign applicants, 2024-25 academic year



Neil O'Brien Comment

A fifth of all the money lent by the Student Loans Company last year went to people who are not British nationals — £4 billion a year of British taxpayers' money. Five pence in every pound lent went to nationals of Romania alone.

Much of this will not be repaid, so taxpayers are subsidising people who may well end up living in other countries. Given the justified outrage over how much British students are being charged, and the brutally unfair interest rates they are having to pay, this is utterly perverse.

Why is this happening? We stopped having to treat EU nationals like British students five years ago when we left the EU, and although Labour is thinking of conceding this as part of ongoing negotiations, at least at present we don't have to give EU nationals student loans any more.

And yet, the share of student loans going to non-UK nationals has gone up, not down. Why? As part of the withdrawal agreement, we agreed to maintain the rights of EU citizens who were already living here before we left, through the EU settlement scheme.

That was reasonable, but the deadline to apply passed five years ago. So surely, you'd expect it to be over now. No. In the past 12 months, around 66,000 new applicants gained residency via this scheme, five years after the deadline. Instead of tailing off, the number of new applicants given settled status actually spiked in the past quarter. Over 160,000 "late applicants" have been granted settled status since the deadline of June 30, 2021, along with a further 54,000 family members joining them — so about 220,000 people. And 124,000 people applying after the deadline got pre-settled status, with 202,000 family members joining them.

Why is the Home Office allowing these late claims, and on what basis are they still being granted?

I've asked, but it refuses to answer. If you missed the deadline by a week, I would understand. But five years late is another matter.

Romanian nationals are five times more likely to apply than other EU nationals — and at least one in every 20 Romanian citizens now has settled or pre-settled status in the UK.

While the amounts borrowed by Polish people has barely changed in five years, the amount borrowed by Romanians has doubled to £1.25 billion.

The government seems asleep at the wheel. It does not publish data on lending to non-UK nationals or any estimates of repayment rates. I have had to drag this information out of the government via parliamentary questions. These have revealed a much lower rate of repayment for non-UK nationals, with 51 per cent making a repayment last year, compared with 68 per cent for British students. Less than half of Romanians, just 45 per cent, are repaying.

British taxpayers are probably going to be losing a bit over £2 billion a year on loans to non-UK nationals.

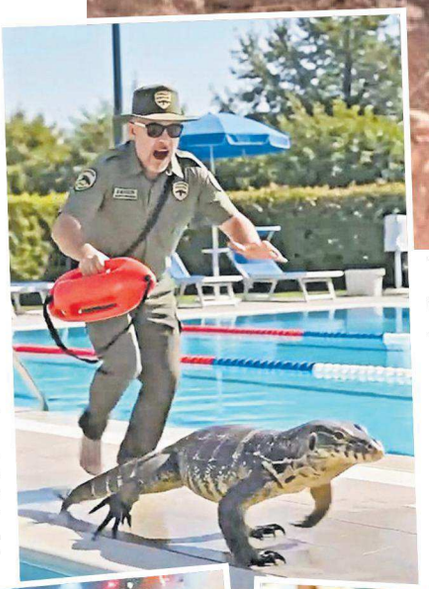
The EU scheme was a reasonable way to protect the rights of EU nationals here and Britons in Europe. But it was supposed to be a one-off.

We cannot afford to be handing out settlement when it means entitlements to benefits and student loans.

Neil O'Brien is the Conservative MP for Harborough, Oadby & Wigston and the shadow minister for policy renewal and development.

Mamma mia! It's the beast of Brescia

Sightings of a giant reptile have captivated an Italian town — and led to a host of memes, writes **James Imam**



The lizard photographed in Montichiari, in the Brescia region. Left, the local mayor, Marco Togni, in AI-generated videos

The beam of a torch cut through the darkness of a northern Italian field, revealing a sight no one had expected. A large reptile, of a species more accustomed to the tropics, stared back at its pursuer with a beady, unblinking eye.

The creature was not a native species, but a 1.5 metre-long Papuan monitor — a powerful predator from Indonesia and Papua New Guinea that had somehow found its way to the countryside near Montichiari, near Brescia in Lombardy. The photograph prompted a lizard hunt that has captivated this rural town for almost a month.

Rumours had been swirling about the lizard ever since a worker reported seeing it at the farm in the first week of July. A fortnight later, on July 17, the same farmhand succeeded in photographing the creature.

"I didn't initially believe it could be true," Marco Togni, the mayor of Montichiari, told The Times. "But we have now verified the image and we can say that it is absolutely real." There have now been three reported sightings in the space of two weeks.

Papuan monitors — also known as crocodile monitors — are fast runners with powerful claws and can react aggressively if frightened or cornered, inflicting serious bites, scratches and forceful tail strikes. Like their heavier cousins Komodo dragons, the reptiles are venomous and typically feed on eggs, birds and small mammals like rats and bandicoots, but have also been known to take down pigs, deer and hunting dogs. One human fatality was reported in 1983, when a Papuan woman was bitten by a Papuan monitor and died from an infection.

Keeping the species in Italy is illegal, although it is also protected, meaning the lizard cannot be killed, except in self-defence.

"We don't know how it got here," Togni said, suggesting that a resident must have been keeping it illegally. "It either escaped or was abandoned."

To protect residents, the council has banned walking and cycling in the area where the lizard was seen, while farm workers have been told to keep the doors of their cabins closed.

A search operation has also been launched, using drones equipped with thermal cameras and night vision, which so far have been sent out at dawn and during the evening for ten days. Two cage traps containing chicken have also been set up.

"The reptile is cold-blooded," Togni explained. "It warms itself in the sun, so we hope the thermal cameras will detect a difference in temperature."

Other sightings of creatures alien to Italy this year have generated intense media interest.

A reported crocodile sighting in the Tuscan village of Masiano in May triggered search operations and inspired a local amateur football club to rename itself the Masiano Crocodiles. The village was given the tongue-in-cheek nickname "the Loch Ness of Tuscany", despite doubts over whether a photograph of the reptile was genuine or AI-generated.

A very real infestation of peacocks in the spring also wreaked havoc in Punta Marina, near Ravenna, with the screeches of more than 100 exotic birds keeping locals awake at night and prompting some to demand that they be culled.

The lizard has so far evaded capture but Togni's campaign has inspired a flood of memes and transformed the mayor into an unlikely social media star.

One AI-generated video portrays him as a sunglasses-wearing lizard ranger. The lizard lounges beside a swimming pool with a cocktail, before fleeing from the ranger and escaping in a light aircraft. The pair are also seen on stage together performing a specially composed song, *Beware of the Lizard*.

The video was created by Michele Sanguinetta, a local high school teacher and musician. He said the idea came to him after a night out. He first recorded the melody and keyboard accompaniment into one AI program before using another to generate the video from text prompts.

"I didn't know the mayor but he later called to thank me," Sanguinetta said. "I wanted to ease people's fears with a bit of humour."

If the lizard is eventually captured, it will be handed over to wildlife specialists, who will donate it to an approved facility such as a zoo.

Togni is taking the memes in good spirit, having reposted the lizard ranger video on his social media.

"It's a lot of fun and I showed support with a bit of humour, but it's important to also maintain an official tone," the mayor said. "The situation afflicting this town is serious."

Not to be trifled with

The creature roaming Montichiari appears to be a crocodile monitor, also known as a Papuan monitor. It is the largest lizard native to New Guinea, the world's second largest island, and usually lives among swamps and rainforests.

It is one of the longest lizards in the world, growing up to 100in (2.54m) in length, mainly because of its long whip-like tail, and can weigh up to 90kg. It is carnivorous, feeding mainly on birds, small mammals and eggs.

Though not known to prey on larger animals such as humans, the creatures can be aggressive if cornered or threatened. The Encyclopaedia Britannica says it is "considered risky to hunt them".

Argentina dedicates national day to World Cup win over England

Stephen Gibbs
Latin America Correspondent

Argentina is a country replete with national commemoration days: it has one for tango, one for mate — its grassy national brew — and another for "friendship". Now there is one more. As of next year, July 15 will be "National Football Teams Day", marking the date its football squad defeated England in the World Cup.

"The date was chosen to commemorate the great and historic victory of the national team against England in the 2026 World Cup semi-final," the Argentina football association said in a statement. It stressed the decision to mark the occasion had been approved by its board "unanimously".

"The team, led by Lionel Scaloni, was losing to the English side by a single goal, but with goals from Enzo Fernández and Lautaro Martínez, managed to turn the result around and send the entire country into a frenzy of celebration," said the association.

The day, it said, would honour all the national squads, from the youth teams to the beach soccer side that train at the Lionel Messi complex in Buenos Aires, "with the hope, joy, and responsibility of defending the sky blue and white".

Marking July 15 as a day of celebration perhaps diverts attention from what happened four days later, when Argentina lost 1-0 to Spain in the final.

Argentina's deep football rivalry against England goes back, at least, to the 1966 tournament when Antonio Rattín, Argentina's captain, was sent off in the key quarter-final played at Wembley for "verbal dissent", after he protested a foul. The bitterness was consolidated in Argentina's quarter-final victory at the 1986 tournament, four years after the Falklands conflict, and Diego Maradona's infamous "hand of God" goal.

Players held a banner saying the Falkland Islands belong to Argentina

The football association's designation of the national day made no mention of the controversy after this year's match, when some of the Argentine players celebrated by unfurling a banner reading "Las Malvinas son Argentinas", which translates as "The Falklands are Argentine".

Fifa has opened formal disciplinary proceedings against the Argentine Football Association.

News Plagiarism row

Arday claims publisher paid

Charlotte Alt

Jason Arday, who quit as a professor at Cambridge University following accusations of plagiarism, claimed he was paid "1.4 million" for his memoir, which is due to be published this month.

The book, *Great and Unfortunate Things*, which charts how he became the university's youngest black professor, is set to be published by Simon & Schuster on August 11 in the United States and August 27 in the UK.

The publisher has stood by Arday despite allegations of plagiarism, questions over his academic qualifications and accusations that he exaggerated his sporting and fundraising achievements.

Cambridge University, which had said that an investigation into allegations of plagiarism found no evidence of wrongdoing, announced on Wednesday that it had launched a fresh inquiry. Arday resigned shortly afterwards.

It has emerged that in an interview with The Guardian, Arday said Simon & Schuster had offered "1.4 million" for the book in a "pre-empt", a type of deal in which a publisher is so keen to snap up a manuscript that they make a high offer before it can go to auction.

Publishing sources told The Guardian that a book such as Arday's would normally be expected to sell about 5,000 copies, which, at £2 in royalties per copy, would equate to an advance of £10,000.

Arday did not specify whether the 1.4 million figure was in pounds or dollars. Simon & Schuster did not respond to a request for comment on the sum.

The Guardian had planned to serialise *Great and Unfortunate Things* before its publication in the UK but The Times understands there are no longer any plans to do so. A spokesman for The Guardian said: "We don't comment on editorial planning."

Simon & Schuster confirmed shortly before Arday's resignation that it would proceed with publication as planned. A spokesman said on Wednesday: "We are proud to publish Professor Jason Arday. We have worked closely with him on *Great and Unfortunate Things* since acquiring it in April 2024 and can speak to the professionalism and integrity he has brought to every stage of the publication. At Simon & Schuster, we have robust editorial and legal processes in place that we apply to the books we publish. *Great And Unfortunate Things* is Jason Arday's memoir, told through his own recollections and those of the people closest to him. He worked closely with his co-writer, as well as our editorial and legal teams, to carefully research, write and corroborate the narrative."

The publisher said that no allegations of plagiarism had been made regarding the memoir, which was written in collaboration with Eve Claxton, a London-born writer based in New York. Simon & Schuster did not respond to requests for comment.

The memoir recounts Arday's life, from his diagnosis with autism and global development delay at the age of three to speaking his first words at 11. In the book, he claims to have learnt to write at 18.

A manuscript indicates that several claims disputed in recent days are not in the book's final version. Arday's claim to have personally raised up to £5.5 million for 70 charities does not feature. He has defended this claim but clarified that the money was raised over 20 years by a syndicate of 100.

The memoir makes no mention of his claim to have run 600 miles in six days, an achievement that would have placed him among the world's most gifted endurance runners. Arday now says it actually took him 12 days.

On Wednesday, it emerged that Arday appeared to have falsely claimed to have published a book titled *Being Young, Black and Male: Challenging the Dominant Discourse*. According to The Telegraph, Palgrave Macmillan accepted the proposal but did not proceed with publication.

Simon & Schuster was at the centre of a controversy three years ago when a book by Dr David Agus, a prominent American oncologist, was found to contain numerous instances of plagiarism. The Los Angeles Times reported in 2023 that it had found 95 passages in *The Book of Animal Secrets* that were not credited but resembled text that first appeared elsewhere. A review of three previous books by Agus revealed another 120 passages, the paper said.

The publisher said at the time: "We take these matters seriously, as does the author, and regret that these errors were included in the initial editions of the book."

In 2022 Simon & Schuster came under fire over "hand-signed" special editions of Bob Dylan's book *The Philosophy of Modern Song*, which were sold for $600 but actually featured the singer's autopen signature. The publisher eventually offered full refunds.

Professor's resignation, letters, page 26
Case has put spotlight on academic vetting and rigour, leading article, page 27

Resignation 'AI-written'

Tom Ball

Jason Arday appears to have used artificial intelligence to help write his resignation letter after days of scrutiny over allegations of plagiarism, according to three separate detection tools.

On Wednesday night Arday released a 600-word statement in which he announced that he would be stepping down from his position as a professor of sociology at Cambridge University.

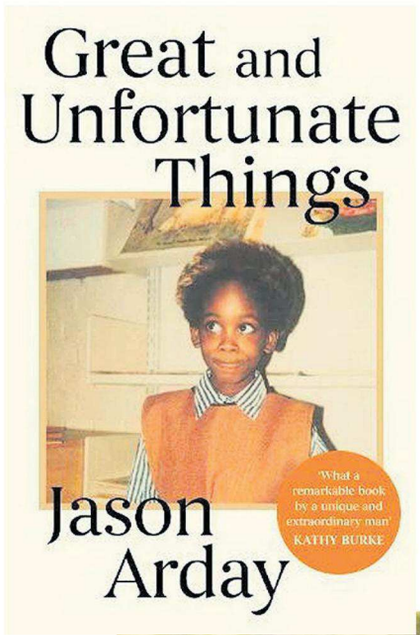
When The Times ran the letter through four market-leading detection tools, three assessed that it had been written either entirely or almost entirely by AI. Pangram and Winston AI both deemed the text 100 per cent AI-generated, while Humalingo assessed it at 94 per cent AI-generated. Turnitin gave it a mark of 68 per cent AI.

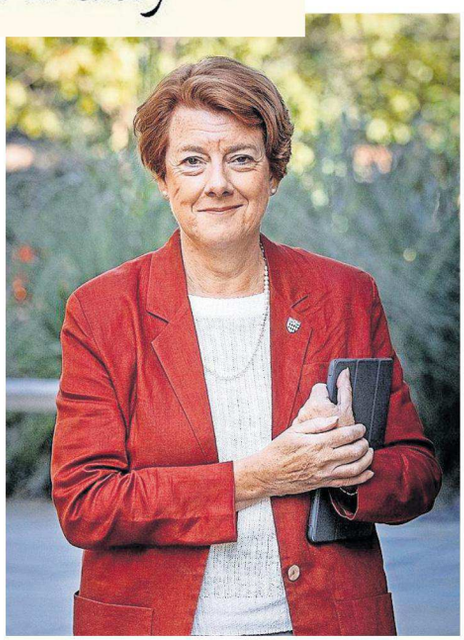
AI detectors analyse the patterns that large language models often leave behind when composing texts. No detection tool claims to be totally accurate.

Arday wrote in his letter that the years since his appointment had been "marked by an unrelenting level of public scrutiny and personal attack." He added: "While criticism is an inevitable part of academic life, what I have experienced has gone far beyond scholarly disagreement."

Arday did not respond to any of the allegations of plagiarism, nor address any of the other claims he is said to have made.

He was contacted for comment.





Jason Arday's publisher, Simon & Schuster, will publish his memoir, left, as planned. His former boss, Hilary Cremin, below right, told Arday in a BBC report when he was taken on as a professor, right: "You are the best in the world in terms of the research that you do." Baroness Morgan of Huyton, below, was on the board of electors that appointed him

I was doing my job as a reporter, and then he went to the police

Behind the story

Scribbling down shorthand notes at a hearing in the Royal Courts of Justice on February 3 this year, my phone began to silently buzz — a call from an unknown mobile number (Jack Grove writes).

Rushing to file copy, however, I decided to take the voicemail at my desk, about ten minutes away.

I was shocked to hear it was from the Metropolitan Police, asking me to call them back. Why? Nothing remarkable had happened to me in the previous year. When I rang back, the officer explained a complaint had been made against me regarding the University of Cambridge professor Jason Arday, but the matter was now closed. But it was important, the officer explained, that I not contact him again, because it was affecting his mental health. I hadn't emailed Arday in four months — my last had been in September, offering a formal right of reply to allegations that he had plagiarised his PhD.

That allegation was not made lightly. I had assembled a 63-page report which detailed how he had apparently used, without proper citation, huge chunks from a thesis written in 2009 by another student, Paula Zwozdiak-Myers, now a highly respected education academic at Brunel University of London. Further checks found passages that seemed to be lifted from the work of researchers based in the US, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere in the UK. In total, I submitted 97 pages of evidence to Cambridge and Arday's awarding institution, Liverpool John Moores University, for their investigation.

Serious allegations, certainly. Deeply embarrassing and distressing, definitely. Although Arday was eventually cleared of plagiarism after a review by Liverpool John Moores, a frenzy of coverage led to Cambridge opening an investigation into Arday's academic record and CV, followed shortly afterwards by Arday announcing his resignation.

But were my enquiries grounds for a criminal complaint? At Times Higher Education (THE), we cover stories of this sort frequently.

Maybe my pursuit of this story was too "incessant", as Arday has claimed, hounding him about details in his personal biography that had little bearing on his academic role? In fact, prior to the letter that garnered a response from his solicitors, I submitted only three polite emails directly to Arday over the course of two months, asking about suspicions raised by multiple professors about plagiarism or odd data in his paper for the journal Social Sciences in 2018, then a further one about discrepancies in his CV and, finally, when and where his much-vaunted running achievements and charity activities took place.

These emails were factual: there was almost no evidence, I said, that he had completed any of these runs, particularly the "600 miles in six days" slog. That feat, according to one YouTube talk, took place in 2013 but there was no record of it, despite lesser runs gaining acres of publicity. I received no response from Arday, with all subsequent responses coming via the Cambridge press office.

I believe these were all legitimate enquiries to put to Arday — particularly regarding the concerns around his prior papers, which had been the basis of his rise from a PhD student to professor within six years.

I explained to the Scotland Yard officer that I was a journalist looking into a story with a public interest dimension, and asked him whether he realised that he was calling a journalist. He told me Arday had said I'd been making online posts against him. But I hadn't made any online posts about Arday, so what was the complaint? He didn't really respond, simply repeating his request that I

‘1.4 million’ for his memoir

BBC; ALAN BENNETT

Serious questions for sector’s soft bigotry

Sonia Sodha
Comment

The tale of Jason Arday is one of meteoric rise to the high echelons of academia followed by an even more spectacular fall from grace. His imploding star leaves behind a debris of serious questions for the university sector.

How on earth did someone who claimed to have done things it turns out he did not — such as publishing a particular book — get elevated to such heights by Cambridge University? Why did internal investigations into plagiarism clear him of any academic wrongdoing, when investigations by journalists and academics have generated so many serious allegations of borrowed material and fabricated data? How did he get past his academic seniors, supposedly some of the cleverest among us?

Some are already trying to boil this down purely to a lack of academic quality control. This narrative goes: there will always be chancers and grifters out there. Safeguards such as peer review rely on good faith and some of them get through. This has nothing to do with Arday’s race or his autism diagnosis. It’s a coincidence he was dripping in protected characteristics.

Such thinking is a product of stunning levels of intellectual dishonesty. Setting aside the plagiarism and fabrication allegations, I’m struck by just how ... bad Arday’s work is. It makes me cringe to watch video of Professor Hilary Cremin, head of Cambridge’s faculty of education, fawning over him: “We’re so lucky to have you. You’re the best in the world in terms of the research you do.” I’m gobsmacked that she didn’t think it might be worth trying to read the book he’d claimed to have written before offering him a plum job.

But then, why should she? Arday wasn’t hired for his brain. He was hired because he is a diversity poster child: a black man with dreadlocks who claims to have been non-verbal until he was 11. The American academic John McWhorter puts it brutally: those who hired him “think black people are dumb”. This is the easy route to diversity — of shortcuts and saviours. I don’t think the faculty wanted a smart black academic such as McWhorter to challenge them on their lazy notions of equity. Too much risk of wrongthink. They didn’t want to do the hard graft of making sure the best black and working class minds have just as much opportunity to become professors as anyone else. No, they wanted to show off to the world how progressive and cool they are.

Unfortunately this is now ingrained in some chunks of modern academia, places where midwitted groupthink is prized and people parrot idiotic ideologies in order to remain in with their mates. Of course it doesn’t make any difference to women if men are permitted to self-identify into their changing rooms and rape crisis centres. Women sticking up for their rights are such transphobic bigots!

This can now go one of two ways. If the establishment goes down the “it’s just our quality systems” road, they will provide succour to academics such as Nathan Cofnas, who uncovered some of Arday’s plagiarism but was motivated by what I regard as his racist belief that under a true meritocracy black people “would disappear from almost all high-profile positions outside of sports and entertainment”.

Or there could be a healthy reset on diversity, prompting genuine reflection on the sector’s soft bigotry of low expectations and mushy groupthink. Academia could move towards policies that prioritise genuine equality of opportunity over virtue-signalling appointments that only serve to undermine academics. Is the sector capable of this though?

Head of faculty at Cambridge gave ‘full support’

Continued from page 1

and ... he has our full support”. Cremin concluded her email by saying “we very much hope that this matter has been addressed to your satisfaction”.

Hammersley responded by saying he did not feel the matter had been dealt with satisfactorily and said he believed an investigation of Arday’s other publications should be undertaken. That Arday had decided to withdraw his article from the online journal, he added, showed that the plagiarism claims were not “mere allegation but a proven case”. He did not receive a reply.

Arday, 41, was appointed to Cambridge after applying for a vacant professorship in the faculty of education. He was selected by an independent panel of nine members, known as the board of electors, chaired by Baroness Morgan of Huyton, a Labour peer and master of Fitzwilliam College.

Other members of the panel were: Professor Anoop Nayak, of Newcastle University; Professor Louise Archer of University College London (UCL); Professor Jo-Anne Dillabough of the University of Cambridge; Professor Tim Harper, fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge; Professor Michalinos Zembylas, from the Open University of Cyprus; Professor Karen Coats of Homerton College, Cambridge; Professor Martin Mills from UCL; and Professor Paul Ramchandani of Wolfson College, Cambridge.

Harris and Hammersley brought their concerns to Cremin after Harris wrote to Arday directly asking him to clear up “certain oddities and confusions”. In particular Harris highlighted a number of similarities between a 2018 paper published by Arday and a study by a renowned epidemiologist.

Arday did not initially respond, but wrote back a week later after Harris sent a follow-up message. He did not engage with Harris’s critiques and instead accused him of acting “without any reflexivity or humility whatsoever”.

Arday wrote: “Instead of spending your time trying to dismantle racism and ableism, you have spent what I assume is hours combing through my work looking for mistakes and then reporting them to various institutions. I have no problem with constructive criticism, but the tone of your emails are unkind and hostile.”

He asked him not to write to him again. When Harris did so, prefacing his email by stating his admiration for him, Arday reported him to the police for harassment. Devon and Cornwall police later declined to pursue the case.

Arday made a similar complaint last year against Jack Grove, a journalist at Times Higher Education magazine. Yesterday Sir Mark Rowley, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, admitted the force “dropped the ball” when it spent four months investigating Grove.

Speaking to the BBC in 2023, Cremin said that the board of electors had been “unanimous” in their support for Arday’s application. Arday resigned from his position on Wednesday after days of scrutiny over allegations of plagiarism, which he has denied.

Neither Morgan nor any other of the panel members responded to a request for comment as to the basis on which they chose Arday. An email sent to Cremin asking for comment received an automated out-of-office response.

Senior academics at Cambridge have said that leaders deserve blame for the “grotesque racism which this whole business has unleashed”, The Guardian reported. A joint letter was said to have been circulated at the university calling for an inquiry into Arday’s appointment, with many suggesting the university had wanted a “quick fix” to improve diversity. Priyamvada Gopal, professor of postcolonial studies at the English faculty, told the newspaper: “This requires accountability now from those responsible, not a cover-up.”

the fact that Arday had written for THE on several occasions.

Arday’s resignation is unlikely to be the end of this extraordinary story.

Cambridge’s position up until now had been that it was for Liverpool John Moores to investigate Arday’s PhD. This may have been technically correct, but given Arday’s profile, and the seriousness of the allegations against him, many in the sector found Cambridge’s response to be inadequate for too long.

To my mind, using an arcane technicality within Cambridge’s byzantine research procedures to prevent further scrutiny of questions about Arday’s academic track record risked bordering on the farcical. Cambridge may have put this right but in the minds of many in academia and wider society, it is the Arday case that now demands the sector regulator’s attention.

Jack Grove is a reporter and deputy features editor at THE, where this piece was originally published

News

PHIL WILKINSON

Soft focus The felt-artist Moy Mackay's exhibition features landscapes using merino fleece fibres and stitch. It runs at Dundas St Gallery, Edinburgh, until August 13

Chemo after surgery could help combat brain cancer

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

Blasting aggressive brain cancer with chemotherapy minutes or hours after surgery could improve the effectiveness of the treatment, research has found.

Scientists at the University of Manchester have discovered two new windows of opportunity for chemotherapy, which are 15 minutes and 48 to 72 hours after surgery. Typically there is a delay of four to six weeks to allow a patient to recover.

Their study shows that the blood-brain barrier, which protects the brain from harm but can also limit drug concentrations, is disrupted during the two windows in the immediate and early periods after surgery.

The findings are in early stages but could potentially lead to changes in treatment for glioblastoma patients, who have poor prognoses at present.

About 3,200 people are diagnosed with glioblastoma, a fast-growing type of brain cancer, each year in the UK. The average survival time with the disease is 12 to 18 months, and fewer than 5 per cent of patients survive for longer than five years. Standard NHS treatment for the cancer has not changed substantially since 2005.

The authors of the new study, published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, performed mice studies to mimic the clinical procedure of removing a tumour and used a formulation that does not typically enter the brain — unless there is disruption to the blood-brain barrier. The team found the surgery disrupted the blood brain barrier, "revealing the opportunity for early treatment within specific temporal windows".

On Tuesday the swimmer Archie Goodburn appealed to Andy Burnham to put more money and resources into tackling brain cancer.

The 25-year-old, who was diagnosed with brain cancer when he was 22, described how trials around the world were not being seen in the UK which he said was "unfair and unjust".

Goodburn was in tears as he told the BBC's *Breakfast* programme: "Please invest and make the difference. I'm on my knees begging for not just my own life but those who are affected and the families all around the country."

The prime minister agreed to meet the swimmer after his plea.

Dr Thomas Kisby, who helped lead the study, said: "For the first time, we've shown glioblastoma surgery briefly exposes a vulnerability we can exploit.

"We suggest that the hours and days after surgery may hold the key to stopping glioblastoma from returning."

AI designs viruses for first time

Kaya Burgess

Completely new viruses not found in nature have been designed using artificial intelligence for the first time.

Researchers at Stanford University created 16 bacteriophages, which attack bacteria but cannot directly harm human or animal cells. They set a cocktail of these viruses loose in petri dishes to feast on two strains of *E. coli* bacteria that had developed a resistance to naturally occurring viruses.

It is also the first time that an entire functional genome has been designed from scratch by AI.

The AI systems used, called Evo 1 and Evo 2, are known as genome language models. They were trained on genetic data from millions of bacteriophages.

The systems designed thousands of genomes for the viruses and 302 of the most promising were picked for testing, but only 16 were ultimately able to successfully infect the bacteria.

The findings were published in the journal Science. In an accompanying article, Professor Tom Inglesby and Dr Moritz Hanke warned: "Although this is promising for life sciences applications, it also raises urgent biosafety and biosecurity questions."

● AI models regularly go behind their human overseers' backs to conduct cyberattacks, companies have admitted. At the Black Hat conference in Las Vegas, researchers from the ChatGPT creator OpenAI said a "swarm" of bots left hacking tips for one another before one broke into the website of the tech firm Hugging Face. Facebook's owner, Meta, said yesterday that one of its AI models was able to hack into another organisation's systems during tests.

Motherhood's link to a longer life

Kaya Burgess Science Correspondent

Raising children can be an exhausting and expensive business, but mothers across the animal kingdom, including humans, tend to live longer despite the extra physical toll and costs. Scientists now think they understand why.

Mothers are not only set up by evolution to have the extra strength and resilience to bear offspring. They also benefit from additional protection that is triggered when they become pregnant and start lactating, while the ovaries act as a "hub" that sends signals to keep organs functioning healthily around the body. These are the conclusions of a new, in-depth review of scientific studies examining the link between motherhood and longevity, conducted by the Buck Institute for Research on Aging in California.

The study in the journal Cell notes that in some "eusocial" species, such as those which have a queen that produces most of the offspring for a colony, "extraordinary fecundity is coupled with exceptional longevity".

Bearing offspring could boost her ability to withstand stresses. In many species, mothers need this strength to raise and protect children.

In human mothers, timing is key. Women who reach puberty early or have children at a younger age seem to suffer adverse consequences, linked to higher rates of "cardiometabolic diseases, cognitive decline, frailty, and premature mortality". However, those who have their first child later in life appear to have a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic heart failure and biological ageing.

Research analysed by the Buck Institute's review found that each additional year of breastfeeding over a woman's life is linked with a 14 to 15 per cent reduction in the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Quintagram® No 2640

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Relaxed (2,4)

_ _ _ _ _ _

2 Childcare facility (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Clear (a riverbed) of sediment (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Range (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

5 Height of one's line of sight (3,5)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	C	C	D	D	E	E
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
E	E	G	H	L	L	N	R
R	S	T	T	T	V	X	Y

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

London scissor attack

A woman accused of stabbing four men in the back with a pair of scissors in Covent Garden, London, has appeared in Highbury magistrates' court. Stella Gollovena, 47, of no fixed address, was charged with four counts of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. She will next appear at Snaresbrook crown court on September 3.

Priest failed to report

A priest was "neglectful in his duties" in failing to investigate a report that John Smyth, a Christian barrister, was beating young men, a tribunal has ruled. It heard that the Rev Canon Andrew Cornes believed people at the camps had confronted Smyth. It added Cornes should have taken steps to share the report with his superiors.

E-scooter injury risk

E-scooter riders face a significantly higher risk of severe brain and organ injuries than cyclists or motorcyclists, an NHS study of major trauma data has found. Researchers also warned the vehicles may be biased toward male body proportions, placing women at greater risk, while highlighting that fewer than 6 per cent of riders wear helmets.

Marmots uncensored

Professor Daniel Blumstein, a biologist in Colorado, has found an unusual way to support his wildlife research by offering "uncensored marmot content" on the OnlyFans website favoured by pornstars. His "OnlyMarms" channel, featuring the large, squirrel-like rodents in their natural habitat, helps to generate funding for the research project.

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Mob tries to storm asylum homes

Mark Ludlow, Herbie Russell, Geraldine Scott

SCOTT HUSSEY/X; SWNS

Police stand guard outside a house in Thetford after a mob gathered suspecting asylum seekers were being housed there

Police evacuated five men from a house in Norfolk after a mob of 100 people attempted to force their way into three properties which they claimed housed asylum seekers.

Tensions were high in the market town of Thetford after the government's proposal to use the nearby RAF base to house up to 1,000 asylum seekers. Police said they were called to a property on St John's Way in the town after 8pm on Tuesday as a group of people attempted to gain entry to a house. A window was smashed and a fence and letter box damaged.

"The group were shouting and preventing a workman from leaving. A resident of the same property reported a group of between 30 and 50 people trying to get into the house," police said.

Police later attended a second property where the same group smashed windows and a third where people entered a property, forcing the resident out and allegedly stealing their phone.

Police said a man in his thirties was arrested on Wednesday on suspicion of a public order offence.

Two officers were taken to hospital after a second night of disorder in Thetford on Wednesday. A male officer was struck with a rock while a female officer was "seriously bitten", breaking the skin. A third officer was spat at.

Two men were arrested on suspicion of public order offences, harassment and possession of an offensive weapon.

Police said that "significant resources" were deployed to Thetford on Wednesday night to maintain public safety after a large group of people gathered on Clover Way. Before this, a large crowd had gathered outside the police station for an anti-immigration protest, which was largely peaceful.

The unrest began after the group of five men were seen being moved into the St John's Way property on Tuesday. A neighbour told local media they had been told in May that people were moving into the house, but the landlord had not said they might be asylum seekers.

Word spread on social media on Tuesday afternoon and people began arriving at the estate after 7pm.

Yesterday afternoon, dozens of police officers, including riot police, gathered outside a property on the Abbey Estate.

They were met by more than 100 people, many residents, who were aware of rumours on social media that a property on the road was housing asylum seekers. At 9.30pm, with about half the crowd having dissipated, there were shouts of "get them out" and "deport, deport, deport the motherf***ers".

Police arrested two men including one on suspicion of inciting racial hatred, relating to offences allegedly committed on Wednesday night. A second was arrested on suspicion of being drunk and disorderly.

Officers also issued ten dispersal orders under Section 35 powers, ordering individuals to leave the area to prevent further disorder and protect public safety, police said.

Emma, an estate resident, said she "does not condone the violence" of previous nights. Police have put in public safety measures in Thetford, including requiring people to remove face coverings if asked to by police, or risk arrest.

Officers were also given powers to direct people away from areas if they are committing, or are suspected of planning to commit, antisocial behaviour.

Terry Jermy, the Labour MP for South West Norfolk, condemned the harassment of people in the properties in Thetford, saying the "ugly scenes over the past few days have been difficult to watch and are deeply concerning". He posted on X: "Mob rule and vigilantism is not acceptable."

Jermy said he was concerned that the latest incidents could undermine legitimate opposition to the Home Office's plans to turn RAF Barnham into accommodation for asylum seekers.

Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader, said the proposed use of RAF Barnham to house asylum seekers would leave locals living near the site "very worried and very scared". The base is about a mile from Thetford.

A Home Office official said they were committed to working with local authorities to house up to 3,750 asylum seekers in basic accommodation, including ex-military sites such as RAF Barnham.

"The concerns of communities are central to our immigration reforms," the official said. "The population of asylum seekers in hotels has fallen by 35 per cent in the last year and by 63 per cent from the peak of 56,000 in 2023. Overall asylum costs have already fallen by nearly £1 billion since the general election."

Immigration battleground of Norfolk

Behind the story

Norfolk has become one of the country's most significant immigration battlegrounds, with a series of protests against asylum accommodation and a growing shift towards parties advocating tougher border controls (Geraldine Scott writes).

The county has seen repeated demonstrations over the use of hotels to house asylum seekers, including protests outside the Brook Hotel in Norwich and opposition to the Home Office's plans to accommodate up to 1,000 asylum seekers at the former RAF Barnham site, a mile from Thetford. Norwich also saw anti-immigration demonstrations this year after seven Afghan refugees were charged as part of a child sexual exploitation investigation.

In May, Reform UK emerged as the largest party on Norfolk county council, while Great Yarmouth is represented by Restore Britain MP Rupert Lowe. Lowe has campaigned for mass deportations and stricter immigration controls.

Norwich has long stood apart from the rest of Norfolk, traditionally returning at least one Labour MP. More recently, the city has become increasingly fertile ground for the Greens, whose success has been fuelled in part by the large student population.

But even in Norwich protests have erupted — Unite the Right attempted a march in the city this year, while Britain First held a "march for remigration" in July, which was met by anti-fascist counterprotests.

Family pays tribute to Athens victim

Lara Wildenberg, George Odling

The family of the woman whose body was found in a suitcase in Greece have remembered her as "kind, honest and selfless".

Elisabeth-Jane Ross, known as Lisa, 38, was a charity worker from Edinburgh volunteering in Athens.

Her body was found in an abandoned building in the Kypseli district on July 18 — several days after she was reported missing.

Sharif Ahmadzai, 26, a competitive boxer from Afghanistan, has been charged with killing her and stealing thousands of euros from her bank accounts. Greek media reported the testimony of Ahmadzai's wife describing the moment she became suspicious of her husband.

Her family released a photo and paid tribute to her, saying in a statement: "Following our recent tragic loss, we are making this brief statement as Lisa's family ... Lisa will forever be remembered as a kind, honest, and selfless person. Her integrity was uncompromising and she dedicated her life to helping people in need ... We are in deep pain and ask for time and respect for our privacy as we try to cope with our loss."

The photo shows Ross sitting cross legged on what appears to be a mountain. She had arrived in Athens on June 26. Ross had travelled regularly to Greece to volunteer with non-governmental organisations. One group she worked with provides medical support to refugees, including those from Afghanistan and Iran.

Ahmadzai will face trial within 18 months after refusing to enter a plea at a Greek court yesterday to the alleged murder of Ross.

Ahmadzai is said to have admitted dumping Ross in the suitcase and stealing her bank cards, but is understood to deny killing her, claiming he found her already dead. He declined to comment during a brief hearing at the city's Evelpidon law courts, and his lawyer said he would not do so until toxicology and medical reports were submitted.

An emotional testimony said to have been given by his wife, Alaina Hall, to Greek police has emerged, in which the US-born NGO worker described how her husband aroused her suspicions.

Hall, who ran the organisation Love Every Nation alongside Ahmadzai, said she first met the victim in February through shared volunteering and Christian church gatherings, the Greek news outlet Proto Thema reported.

She said that on the evening of July 15 at about midnight, she awoke to find her husband was not at home and saw via a locator app that he was at the flat where Ross was staying.

When she called her husband, he claimed to have been watching a football match near by and had gone to the flat to use the lavatory.

By July 29, Hall said she became concerned that her friend may have been the same woman whose body had been found in a suitcase in Kypseli.

Coroner rules convicted fraudster 'did murder wife'

A convicted fraudster who was cleared in court five years ago of killing his wealthy heiress wife murdered her, a coroner has ruled.

Donald McPherson, 53, was ordered to be found not guilty of the murder of his wife Paula Leeson, 47, on a judge's direction to the jury halfway through his trial at Manchester crown court in 2021.

Donald McPherson was cleared in court of killing his wife Paula Leeson

He had taken out £3.5 million life insurance on the mother-of-one shortly before her death on June 6, 2017, and within hours of her "accidental drowning" McPherson was emptying her accounts of thousands of pounds to pay off his debts.

Two years ago Leeson's family blocked him from inheriting his wife's £4.4 million estate.

A judge in civil proceedings brought by the Leeson family at the High Court ruled McPherson had unlawfully killed his wife for money by throttling her unconscious then drowning her in a swimming pool in Denmark in 2017.

At the inquest into the death of Leeson, delayed until yesterday by the murder trial and civil hearings, a coroner ruled she agreed with the unlawful killing verdict. Alison Mutch, senior coroner for Manchester South, told Stockport coroner's court McPherson was heavily in debt and was the only person to benefit from his wife's death. She added: "I am therefore satisfied he did murder his wife."

‘Summer of sex’ MP in row over trans guidance

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

A war of words has erupted between Labour women after the MP who called for a “summer of sex” accused supporters of single-sex spaces of hating transgender people.

Samantha Niblett, the Labour MP for South Derbyshire, attacked the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s (EHRC) statutory code on single-sex spaces, which came into force on Wednesday.

In a video posted on social media on holiday, Niblett said: “This new guidance protects nobody. All it does is cause more division and hatred towards trans people that just want to have their life, like minding their own business, and protects no cis woman who is gender critical — let’s call it what it is, hates trans people, like, because if you didn’t, why would you fear trans people?”

The MP, who this year encouraged people to enjoy a “summer of sex” as part of a push for lifelong education, said she was “so unbelievably ashamed” of politicians’ responses and said: “I will continue to use my platform as an MP to fight for the rights of trans people.” She added: “Don’t kid yourself, ladies. They’re coming for you after they come for the rest of the LGBT community. They’re coming for you. They’re coming for us. Stop pretending this is about protecting women’s rights. It’s nothing of the sort.”

Niblett’s intervention prompted Tonia Antoniazzi, the Labour MP for Gower and one of parliament’s most prominent advocates of single-sex protections, to accuse her of lying.

In a post that later appeared to have been deleted, Antoniazzi said on X: “You’ve lied about me in the media. I have receipts. Have a good break, MPs deserve it. Today, we have clarification, not more confusion. Women and girls need protection from men, stop using trans people as an argument for your pro-sex work, pro-porn agenda.”

Niblett helped to launch an event last week for her Yes, Sex Please, We’re British! campaign. She has said she wants to push for more education around consent, respect and healthy relationships and has pledged to bring a sex toy display to parliament. She said: “Now, in times gone by, being referred to as a ‘sex MP’ would’ve been something quite sleazy and seedy. But thankfully, and hopefully, I’m helping to change that.”

The clash with Antoniazzi exposed divisions within Labour over last year’s Supreme Court ruling, which found that, for the purposes of the Equality Act, sex meant biological sex. The EHRC’s 342-page code of practice sets out how organisations should implement that judgment when providing single-sex services and facilities.

The Times reported yesterday that left-wing councils had launched a co-ordinated effort to defy the code and some had refused to make staff run services on the basis of biological sex. Meanwhile, NHS England refused to set out a timetable for updating policies allowing transgender patients to choose which ward they are treated on. The National Union of Students has produced guidance to help students “resist” the code.

Yvette Cooper, the health secretary, told Times Radio yesterday that the NHS would follow the law when implementing single-sex provision. Asked whether trans women would be accommodated according to their biological sex, she said detailed guidance would be published shortly, but added: “The law’s the law. All of us need to follow the law. The law’s been very clear on this.”

Tonia Antoniazzi hit out at the comments by her Labour colleague

Several Labour MPs continued to campaign publicly against the code, however. Dawn Butler, the MP for Brent East, described the guidance as unworkable and backed an early day motion seeking to block it. She said: “This debate is still dominated by people who don’t understand the realities of trans people’s lives.”

Nadia Whittome, the MP for Nottingham East, called Wednesday “a dark day for trans people” and argued it would exclude them from everyday public life. Others welcomed the guidance. Tracy Gilbert, the Labour MP for Edinburgh North & Leith, said the guidance brought welcome clarification, adding: “The law remains unchanged. No existing rights have been removed, and no new rights have been created under the Equality Act.”

The government said that ministers expected public bodies and service providers to comply with the law and the statutory code. A spokesperson said: “The code provides the clear, workable guidance [organisations] need and if organisations are still unclear, they should get specialist legal advice.

“The government is committed to upholding single-sex spaces while also protecting the rights of trans people. There are clear laws in place to protect trans people from discrimination and harassment, which we continue to uphold. We have strengthened protections for trans people against hate crime and just a month ago published our trans-inclusive conversion practices ban.”

Letters, page 26
Call out this destructive grandstanding, leading article, page 27

Urgent review will exclude grooming gangs from early release

Daisy Eastlake Political Reporter

Andy Burnham will “urgently” identify any grooming gang perpetrators who may still be eligible for early release after The Times revealed some were not excluded.

The Times found a number of cases where men who were convicted of assaulting children in Bradford as part of historical investigations into Asian grooming gangs were not excluded from the early release scheme.

As many of the cases took place before anti-grooming laws were introduced in 2003, the men were charged with indecent assault, which does not fall within the exemptions to the early release scheme announced by the prime minister this week.

Burnham has now asked the Ministry of Justice to conduct a review of all grooming offenders — including those charged with indecent assault — by trawling through paper records and excluding those cases from the early release scheme. A spokesman for the prime minister said yesterday: “As part of the review…the prime minister asked the Ministry of Justice to conduct an in-depth review of cases to ensure that grooming cases were identified.

“This work is happening urgently. This is extremely important to the PM and he has personally intervened to ensure everything possible is being done so that vile groomers are dealt with in the way their victims deserve.”

It is unclear what the government can do, within the law, to prevent those groomers and child sex offenders who were not convicted under the specific offences from being released early. A senior government source said they would look to “recategorise” them but could not say how that would happen.

Manslaughter is another charge not included in the exemption. This means two of PC Andrew Harper’s killers, Albert Bowers and Jessie Cole, will still be eligible for early release.

The Conservatives will attempt to block their release with a parliamentary vote by tabling an amendment to the Sentencing Act 2026 that would exclude criminals convicted of the manslaughter of an emergency worker from the scheme.

Matthew Barber, the Tory police and crime commissioner in Thames Valley, has drafted the amendment for senior Tories to submit to the speaker for consideration by MPs when parliament returns from its summer break next month. He discussed plans with Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, and Nick Timothy, the shadow justice secretary, according to The Telegraph.

Burnham announced a rapid review of the previous Labour government’s early release scheme when he became prime minister.

On Tuesday he announced he was scaling back the programme and excluding anyone who had been found guilty of “rape, serious child sex and other grooming offences”.

However, the announcement has since unravelled as it emerged that historical child abusers who committed their offences before 2003 would not be covered by the exemption.

On Wednesday night Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, wrote to Burnham to highlight the loophole in the law, describing it as “yet another betrayal of victims”. She has called on him to build more prisons and rent jail cells overseas to house offenders.

“I wrote to Andy Burnham last night warning that his policy was going to let rape gangs perpetrators out of prison early,” she said yesterday. “In response, the prime minister has commissioned yet another review. How many more reviews do we need before Andy Burnham does the common sense thing and bans all of these monsters from early release? The brave survivors have been put through hell by this process. They deserve so much better.”

Among those who could be eligible having served only half their sentence are five men jailed in connection to a grooming gang in Bradford. They were jailed last October for abusing a girl from the age of 13 while she was in care. They were found guilty on various counts of indecent assault and each sentenced to between six and eight years in jail last year. That could mean some will be freed by the end of 2028.

Claire Waxman, the victims’ commissioner, said those who had suffered abuse had been left “enduring weeks of stress and uncertainty” after the announcement. She said: “Many have been re-traumatised by poor communication over the summer, which caused many great distress and provided little clarity about what these changes could mean for them or when they might happen.”

No early release from Burnham’s first big test, Patrick Maguire, page 23

GUY BELL/ALAMY

The annual London Trans Pride demonstration in Trafalgar Square last month. Left: the Labour MP Samantha Niblett posts a video criticising the new code of conduct on single-sex spaces

Foreigners could lose their council homes, Tories say

Geraldine Scott

Foreigners would be barred from social housing and existing tenants stripped of their homes under plans unveiled by the Conservatives.

Restricting eligibility would free up about 230,000 homes for families, the party said, and those who no longer qualified would be expected to leave within six months.

The plan is Kemi Badenoch's latest attempt to draw a dividing line with Labour on immigration and welfare, and follows calls from Reform UK to reserve social housing for Britons.

Currently, foreign citizens with settled status, refugee status or certain forms of humanitarian protection can qualify for social housing, while asylum seekers are generally excluded except in limited circumstances, such as cases involving domestic abuse.

Under the proposals, anyone living in social housing who is neither a British, Irish nor EU citizen would lose their entitlement, regardless of whether they have children. Those with EU settled status would be exempt.

For future tenancies, only British citizens and those with EU settled status would be eligible, meaning that arrivals from the EU without settled status would no longer qualify. Couples would lose their entitlement if neither partner was a British or EU citizen and neither held EU settled status.

Helen Whately, the shadow work and pensions secretary, said: "Making Britain your home should be earned by working, paying tax and integrating. It should not come with a free ride on the benefits system. Britain cannot be a cash machine for the world.

"The next Conservative government will make foreign nationals ineligible for social housing. Nearly 230,000 homes could go to British families."

Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader, announced a similar policy in June when he pledged to evict all foreign citizens from social housing if his party entered government. He said Britain had become a "two-tier state against white people".

Zia Yusuf, Reform's home affairs spokesman, said: "The Tories are trying to copy Reform UK policy, but they still end up betraying their instincts to prioritise foreigners. Incredibly, Kemi Badenoch's new policy is to allow tens of thousands of foreign nationals from the EU to occupy British social housing funded by British taxpayers.

"Reform UK will ensure British social housing is strictly for British citizens. The Tories say they will continue to give it to foreign nationals while our own people and veterans are left to fend themselves."

Government statistics suggest that the overwhelming majority of social housing is occupied by British and Irish citizens. According to the English Housing Survey, 88.5 per cent of main householders in social housing in England in 2024-25 were UK or Irish nationals, while 11.5 per cent were not.

Separate estimates suggest that there are about 470,000 non-UK and non-Irish citizens living in social housing in England, although not all would be affected by the policy because many have EU settled status or fall into categories that would remain eligible.

A Labour spokesman said: "This is an unserious, unworkable proposal, copied from Reform, that does nothing to tackle the housing crisis the Tories themselves created.

"People without Indefinite Leave to Remain are already ineligible for social housing, so this policy would primarily affect refugees and long-term UK residents who have contributed to this country but are not British citizens, including NHS staff.

"It would also leave more families at risk of homelessness, while driving up the use of temporary accommodation at the taxpayers' expense. No amount of headline-chasing, or following Reform to the extremes, can hide the damage the Tories did to our housing system. The least they could do is acknowledge their failures."

Andy Burnham, the prime minister, has promised to bring the "biggest council house building programme since the post-war period". However, The Times previously revealed how his plan faces an £800 million-a-year funding hole and risks resulting in 5,000 fewer homes a year.

Starmer critic to sue Labour over mental health claims

Stefan Boscia

A suspended Labour MP is going to sue Andy Burnham's business secretary over "disability discrimination" claims.

Karl Turner, who had the Labour whip suspended in March, is set to sue Jonathan Reynolds and the party in search of a six-figure claim.

He will argue that Reynolds, when he was chief whip earlier this year, told MPs that Turner was mentally ill and that this constitutes a breach of the Equality Act. A source close to Turner said that the claim will accuse Reynolds of "disability discrimination on the grounds of his mental health".

Reynolds and the party will be listed as separate defendants, but neither has received a legal notification of the tribunal, The Times understands.

Turner claimed in an interview with The Times in April that Labour's whips used his past mental health issues to undermine him after he had turned to them for support.

He also repeated the accusation in a session of PMQs on May 20, which saw Turner tell MPs that he had a nervous breakdown after his nephew Matty killed himself in 2015.

Reynolds denies the claims made against him. A party source said: "Labour takes seriously its duties of care towards all its elected representatives as well as its legal duties."

Turner began a campaign against Sir Keir Starmer's proposed jury reforms last year. He had the whip suspended after an interview with a journalist accused of antisemitism.

The Hull East MP is in talks over his return. A government source said he would need to apologise to Reynolds.

Greens threaten Burnham's bounce

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Labour risks having its membership figure overtaken by the Greens as Andy Burnham faces a more than £2.5 million black hole in the party's coffers.

New figures show that Labour's membership fell over the course of a year from 333,235 to 264,754 at the end of last year. Meanwhile, Zack Polanski's party said its total stood at 230,000 in May — about 34,000 short.

A spokesperson for the Greens said its figure had "quadrupled" since Polanski became leader in September last year.

Its membership has continued rising in recent months, having stood at 186,441 at the end of December.

The increase has been credited with some electoral successes including winning the Gorton & Denton parliamentary by-election in February and narrowly coming second in the projected national vote share in the May elections.

Labour sources said the party had lost further members since the number was submitted as part of its annual accounts, with some quitting because of Sir Keir Starmer's leadership.

However, numbers are said to have risen again since the new prime minister took over as leader in July — with one insider calling the change a "Burnham bounce".

Reform UK claims that it has 270,000 members, which — if accurate — could make it the largest political party in the UK.

Zack Polanski became the Green leader in September

Meanwhile, Liberal Democrat membership fell by nearly 3,000 at the end of the last calendar year.

Labour raised more money than any other party — £44.6 million — however, it spent £47.1 million.

This year has been a bumper elections year for Labour, which sought to defend the highest number of council seats and its grip on the Welsh Parliament, as well as aiming to capture control of Holyrood.

It was also forced to unexpectedly pay for campaign costs in the Greater Manchester mayoralty by-election after Burnham stepped down to become the MP for Makerfield.

The Times has been told that Labour has not had a director of fundraising this year after the previous holder of the role stepped down in December.

One party source said: "Andy has promised to change the culture in the party; he may need to prioritise the finances first."

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Bunfight over sacked Bake Off boss

Managing director says she was dismissed after raising concerns about Sky's plans for hit show, **Alex Farber** writes

MARK BOURDILLON/CHANNEL 4

Letty Kavanagh, left, and the Bake Off stars Noel Fielding, Alison Hammond and Paul Hollywood

A former *Great British Bake Off* boss is suing Sky amid claims that it considered taking the show from Channel 4.

Letty Kavanagh has begun High Court legal proceedings against the pay-TV broadcaster and Love Productions, her former employer and the producer of the hit baking show, alleging a breach of contract. She is also pursuing an employment tribunal.

Sky has rejected all claims that it has acted inappropriately.

Kavanagh has alleged that she is owed money after being sacked in November, having worked at the business for 18 years, rising through the ranks to become managing director.

Kavanagh believes she was unfairly dismissed by Sky, which bought Love Productions in 2014 in a deal valued at £35 million, after she raised concerns about the way in which it was seeking to influence the business.

Chief among her fears was a plan mooted by Sky in 2024 to remove *The Great British Bake Off* from Channel 4 to run on its own channels, which she believed would damage the show.

Sky, Netflix and Disney are all understood to have coveted the show for their own channels two years ago, when Channel 4's broadcast deal expired.

But Sky bosses ultimately opted against the move and went on to renew the agreement with Channel 4 for its most popular show, which attracts audiences of up to seven million viewers.

Kavanagh is said to have raised concerns that a move to Sky would not have been in the show's best interests and was also potentially problematic due to its detailed confidential knowledge about the Channel 4 deal.

Sky insiders disputed the suggestion that it would have been inappropriate for it to pick up a show that it ultimately owns.

Kavanagh's other fears were understood to include that Sky sought to axe dozens of shows in the *Bake Off* series and cut hundreds of jobs for staff and freelancers, which she again felt would damage the brand and Love Productions's business.

A source with knowledge of the case believes that Kavanagh may have been unfairly "scapegoated" by Sky for raising genuine concerns of mismanagement of Love Productions. "She was looking out for staff and freelancers at the production company, who risked losing their jobs because of bad management decisions, and was trying to protect the public service broadcasting content which Love Productions is so famed for producing," they said.

They added that Sky's handling of the situation raised questions about its £1.6 billion deal to buy ITV's broadcast and streaming channels.

Kavanagh has also alleged that her attempts to raise concerns with Sky's senior management were dismissed and that she was advised against bringing legal representatives to a meeting to discuss the future of the show — at which she was summarily dismissed.

She also considers that she was discriminated against because of her gender and that male colleagues were treated more favourably, including receiving payments which were withheld from her.

A Sky spokesman said it did not recognise Kavanagh's account.

"We reject the possibility of a conflict of interest in relation to assets we control and wholly own and refute her allegations of discrimination and retaliation in the strongest possible terms," they added. "Regrettably, this matter is the subject of ongoing legal proceedings, in which we intend to vigorously defend our position."

Sky is in the process of selling Love Productions to ITV's production arm, ITV Studios, for £200 million as part of a wider deal with the broadcaster.

The case has emerged weeks ahead of the launch of the latest series of *The Great British Bake Off* in September in which Nigella Lawson will join Paul Hollywood as a judge after the departure of Prue Leith.

One veteran TV producer said that Love Productions has a "strong foundation" with a raft of high-profile shows including BBC Two's *Great British Sewing Bee*, *The Great Pottery Throwdown* and Channel 4's *The Piano*.

But they added that the relationship between Kavanagh and Sky had become increasingly acrimonious after Richard McKerrow, the chief executive of Love Productions, left last year and that her departure was "inevitable".

Kieran Smith, another former Love Productions boss, who left at the same time after nearly two decades at the company, is also understood to have started proceedings with Acas employment arbitration service.

Cécile Frot-Coutaz, the chief content officer for Sky, paid tribute to Kavanagh after her departure. "Letty has played a huge role in the success of Love Productions and on behalf of Sky and myself, I'd like to take this moment to thank her for her passionate and dedicated leadership," she said.

Winemakers predict 'landmark' year

Seren Hughes

Mark Driver jokes that his vines in Sussex think they are back in the Mediterranean thanks to this year's sweltering summer. The founder of Rathfinny Wine Estate believes this year will be a "landmark" year for English sparkling wine, and other winemakers agree that it could be "one of the best vintages English wine has ever seen" as their grapes thrive in the long, dry, hot summer.

It could help boost the standing of English sparkling wine over bubbly from the Champagne region of France, which has announced their lowest-ever yield this year after being crippled by severe droughts and heatwaves that have pushed temperatures beyond optimal conditions.

England has already had four heatwaves this summer. Driver told The Times: "Vines grow in hot countries and England is now a warmer country than it was. So the vines are thriving, the quality is amazing." He is expecting "great flavours, good ripeness, and good sugar levels". He explained: "Vines essentially transform sun into sugars and the grapes hold the sugars and create these beautiful flavours."

The vineyards in the Champagne region have said that they will be picking earlier than usual, in mid-August, a month before most English vineyards expect to pick. Mid-September is also earlier than usual for the English harvest but that longer ripening time still allows "the accumulation of beautiful ripened flavours" that "sets England apart", Driver said.

The quality of this year's wines is on track to be exceptional, but yields could be down due to a late spring frost.

Vineyards such as Balfour in Kent suffered from a frost in May. But after a "fabulous summer", the "quality promises to be quite extraordinary", according to Fergus Elias, the head winemaker. "This has all the hallmarks of one of the best vintages English wine has ever seen."

However, with harvest still a month away, the outlook could change. "A wet September could prove a real problem in terms of disease and crop quality," Elias acknowledged.

Brad Greatrix, the senior winemaker at Nyetimber, said the biggest challenge facing English wine was the "variability" in conditions each year. The last two summers have been favourable but 2024 was cool.

The dry conditions are also stressing some vines. Water stress can encourage vines to concentrate their energy into developing flavour, but too dry conditions can affect berry size.

The winemaker Dermot Sugrue, of Sugrue South Downs in West Sussex, said: "We've had the warmest June on record, the driest July on record, and the vineyards desperately need rain — the vines are extremely stressed. It's very challenging to say the least. We'll make great wines this year for sure, but volumes will be down, and the cost of production will be very high as a result."

Ynyshir awarded top mark after inspectors call again

Seren Hughes

Ynyshir, the celebrated two Michelin-star restaurant in West Wales, has had its food hygiene rating raised to the top mark after it was downgraded to a one out of five last year.

The restaurant, near Machynlleth, treats diners to a 30-course tasting menu served over five hours to the custom soundtrack of an in-house vinyl DJ for £450 per person plus VAT.

The Michelin guide has described Ynyshir as a "truly unique experience", but food hygiene inspectors gave it a one-star rating out of five in November after an inspection the previous month.

In the full food hygiene report, which was released by Ceredigion county council after a freedom of information request from The Times, Ynyshir was found not to have had the right checks in place to serve raw lobster and had a rug hanging on the kitchen wall that could not be properly cleaned.

The restaurant's plans for safe management of ingredients such as foraged birch tree sap, wild garlic, and aged pigeon were also found to be inadequate, while kitchen staff were found not to be cooking their sous vide cod, where the fish is cooked in a vacuum-sealed bag in a water bath, at the right temperature for the right amount of time.

Gareth Ward, chef and owner, accused the inspectors of not understanding his restaurant, insisting what he did was "different" rather than wrong. But he put the required measures in place "immediately" and after a reinspection in February the council's officers raised Ynyshir's rating to five in March.

The council said the business "had addressed all matters identified during the original inspection". The Times approached Ynyshir for comment.

News

MARK PASSMORE PHOTOGRAPHY

Historic roots Final tweaks are made for today's opening of the Taunton Flower Show at Vivary Park. The UK's oldest running flower show was first held in 1831

Army plea to victims after abuse claims

Reports of rape and sexual abuse against female recruits at a military training college for teenagers are extremely distressing and unacceptable, the army has said.

Four young women told the BBC that they had suffered sexual abuse and harassment while they were at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, which provides basic training to under-19s.

The army has called for victims and witnesses of criminal behaviour at the college to come forward. It said yesterday: "Unacceptable and criminal behaviour has absolutely no place in our armed forces and these reports are extremely distressing and serious. People join the army in the hope of having a fantastic career and any such reports are unacceptable and go completely against everything the army stands for."

A woman whom the BBC called Tilly told them she had been raped aged 17 at the college by fellow soldiers. Another woman whom the BBC called Monica said she was sexually assaulted by a fellow soldier who trapped her in a room before touching her without her consent. Another woman was allegedly sexually assaulted and subjected to sexual harassment during her training.

The army said changes had been made in recent years to support victims in coming forward.

Neck massage is RAF's latest weapon

Charlie Parker

British fighter pilots are receiving neck massages between missions to keep them flying for longer as Russia increasingly violates Nato airspace.

Typhoon jets can pull up to 9Gs while scrambling to intercept enemy aircraft, causing 86 per cent of aviators to experience flight-related neck pain, according to RAF research. Conducting such demanding sorties while wearing heavy high-tech helmets can lead to serious injuries that prevent pilots from completing objectives or flying at all.

To avoid sending pained pilots back to the UK for musculoskeletal treatment, military physiotherapists have been deploying on overseas operations, most recently to Poland and Romania.

The RAF's cadre of 26 physios are considered unsung heroes who keep aviators airborne and ground crews in top condition as they work to deter Russian incursions along Nato's 1,500-mile eastern flank.

Nato revealed yesterday that its fighter jets were scrambled 250 per cent more last month than the same period last year. "The reason? Russian military aircraft repeatedly flew close to Nato airspace without a flight plan and transponder signal, leaving our fighters to launch, intercept and identify them," the alliance's Eastern and Central Europe command said. Last week RAF Typhoon pilots from 3 (Fighter) Squadron concluded a four-month operation in Romania. They scrambled seven times, including to engage Russian drones that flew from Ukrainian airspace close to the Nato border, although they did not open fire.

Deploying on roughly 19 operations and exercises a year, the physios' job is to assess, diagnose and deliver early interventions, including physical rehabilitation, "to optimise recovery from injuries sustained whilst deployed".

Between missions, physios assigned to Typhoon squadrons may assess a pilot's fitness to fly as they sit in their cockpits, so they can quickly take off again. Treatment typically takes place elsewhere in the squadron building and includes more substantial mobility sessions targeting the neck, upper and lower back and hips.

A flight lieutenant recently won praise for keeping all RAF personnel deployed in Poland operational, including one "acutely injured" pilot tasked with intercepting Russian aircraft. The physio, named only as Flight Lieutenant Harrison, was deployed last year with Typhoon teams on Operation Chessman, the RAF's contribution to Nato Air Policing at Malbork air base, in Poland. During the four-month operation, British fighters scrambled 20 times to defend Nato airspace from Russian jets and spy planes.

Harrison delivered treatment tailored around an increase in flying frequency, night flying and pilots using the Mk4 helmet and night vision goggles, a heavier combination. She provided interventions to 32 per cent of the deployed personnel in a range of occupations, from Typhoon pilots and engineers to mission support staff and augmentees. All of her patients completed their treatment programmes in theatre and came back to the UK fit and ready for the next tasking.

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I was chased by stalker at Sandringham, says Andrew

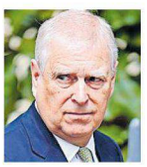
Kate Mansey Assistant Editor

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor has said that he came face-to-face with an alleged stalker "wearing a balaclava face covering" who began to "sprint" after his vehicle on the Sandringham estate.

The King's brother provided an eye witness account to the police after a confrontation with a man near his home in Norfolk.

Westminster magistrates' court heard that Mountbatten-Windsor had been walking his dogs when he saw a man who looked "out of place".

Alex Jenkinson, 39, is charged with using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards Mountbatten-Windsor on May 6. Jenkinson is accused of causing Mountbatten-Windsor to "fear unlawful violence" during the confrontation in Wolferton, close to his Marsh Farm property.



Alex Jenkinson, above, is accused of causing Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor to "fear unlawful violence'

Suffolk police are also applying for a civil Stalking Protection Order against Jenkinson, relying on evidence from Mountbatten-Windsor and searches on Jenkinson's phone.

Parts of Mountbatten-Windsor's statement, which is central to the legal proceedings, were read out in court yesterday.

Tan Ikram, deputy chief magistrate, said that Mountbatten-Windsor had been out for a walk with his dogs on the King's estate when he spotted a car which he assumed to belong to press photographers. Mountbatten-Windsor then got into a car with his private security guards and "drove past the car".

In his statement, Mountbatten-Windsor said that the man "turned and faced me — he was wearing a balaclava face covering". He provided a description of the "out-of-place" man, and added in his statement: "I then saw a loose dog running towards him, then he realised who I was and began to sprint after my vehicle."

Jenkinson has pleaded guilty to failing to provide a specimen of blood while in custody on May 6. However, he denies the public order offence against Mountbatten-Windsor and has also pleaded not guilty to a further charge of using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with intent to cause fear or provoke unlawful violence against another man, Stephen Terry, in King's Lynn, on May 5.

Jenkinson, who is homeless, was not in court after being denied entry to the building because he insisted on staying with his dog, Indie.

Claire Howell, Jenkinson's lawyer, told the court he had been found temporary accommodation where he could leave the dog for future hearings.

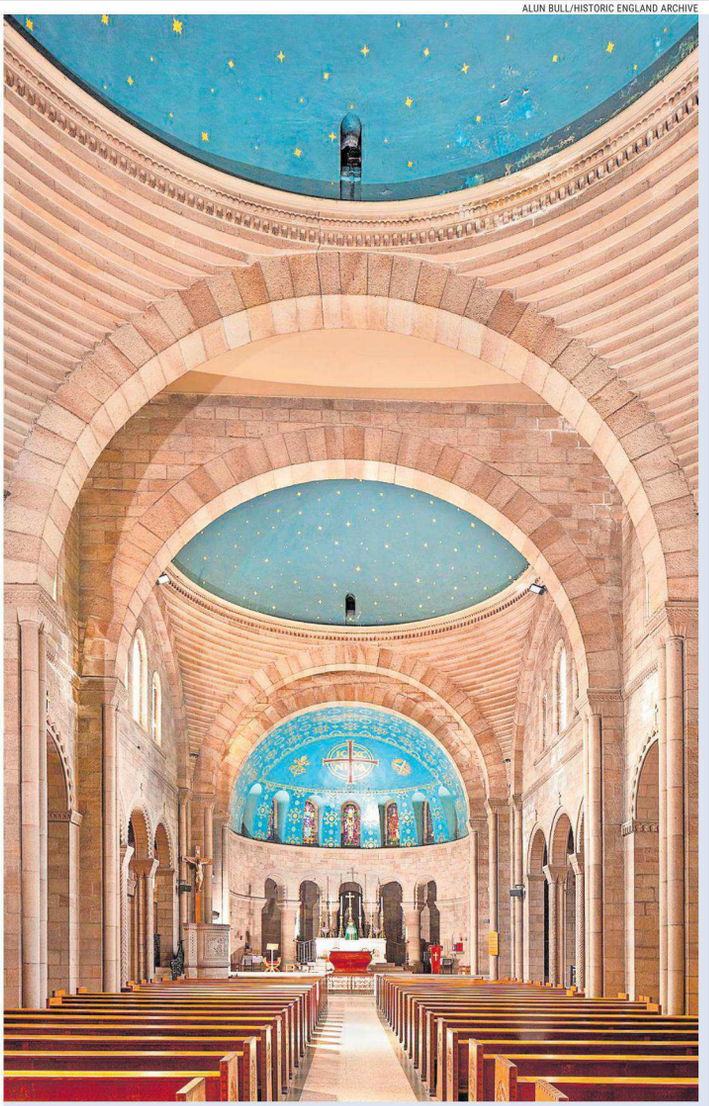
Mountbatten-Windsor is due to give evidence by video link at the criminal trial, which is set for December 21.

Jenkinson, who comes from Stowmarket, Suffolk, is also fighting the making of the Stalking Protection Order. Judge Ikram ruled yesterday that Mountbatten-Windsor, as well as Terry and an eyewitness to the Norfolk incident, must give evidence for a second time at the hearing to determine the Stalking Protection Order application.

"I am persuaded that fairness demands the respondent to these proceedings be allowed to call and cross-examine these witnesses," he said.

The judge has extended the interim Stalking Protection Order.

ALUN BULL/HISTORIC ENGLAND ARCHIVE



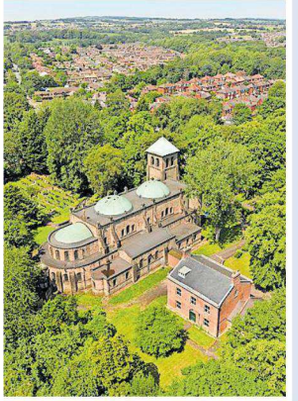
The Roman Catholic Church of St Oswald and St Edmund Arrowsmith is now Grade II* listed

Burnham hails local church's elevation

A church in Andy Burnham's constituency of Makerfield has had its listing upgraded to recognise it as "one of the finest early 20th-century churches in England" (Jack Blackburn writes).

The Roman Catholic Church of St Oswald and St Edmund Arrowsmith is a prominent site in the prime minister's constituency and is also connected to the Catholic school that his children attended.

"I am delighted that St Oswald's Church is being recognised by Historic England," Burnham said. "It's a beautiful building which I know well and I know how treasured it is by the local community."



The church was listed on the National Heritage List for England as a Grade II building in 1988, the bottom rank. It has now been elevated to Grade II*, which places it among the top 8 per cent of listed buildings. The upgrade process began last December, months before it could even have been conceived that Burnham would become the local MP, let alone the prime minister.

The church was completed in 1930 and is considered a masterwork of its architect, John Sydney Brocklesby. It was inspired by the French Romanesque style and is distinctive for its use of pink and buff Darley Dale and Parbold stone. It also has the most extensive collection of stained glass by the Dublin-born artist Harry Clarke.

The church is also notable for its connection to a local martyr, St Edmund Arrowsmith. It was built to house the Jesuit priest's preserved hand, a relic of the man who was born in 1585 and, after his clandestine work as a Catholic priest was executed in 1628.

The church now has the second-highest level of protection, with the decision to upgrade the listing made in late May, a few weeks before Burnham became the MP.

Burnham grew up in Culcheth, a seven-mile drive from the church, and is widely regarded as Britain's first Catholic prime minister. Boris Johnson was the first baptised Catholic to become prime minister, but he was confirmed as an Anglican. Burnham has spoken openly about his faith and confirmed to The Times last month that, while he was not a regular Mass-goer, he still professed the faith. "My mother would never forgive me if I answered no to that question," he said.

Prince Philip foresaw how internet could help royal family

Kate Mansey

Prince Philip set out an early "vision" to courtiers about how the internet could promote the monarchy around the world after the death of Princess Diana, a former palace aide has revealed.

The late Duke of Edinburgh's interest in technology is well known. However, it has emerged that he foresaw how, in the early days of the internet, the worldwide web could help the royal family engage with the public at a delicate time for the institution.

Simon Lewis, who was hired as the first communications secretary at the palace in 1998, spoke to *The Royals* podcast, produced by The Times, about managing the reputation of the monarchy after the death of Princess Diana in August 1997.

He said: "I think the Queen did an amazing job. The Queen, first of all, held her nerve on behalf of the institution, the family, and the Queen got out there and did what she always did best, which was just connecting with people in a very Queen-like way.

"The other thing I feel that was really important and great credit to Prince Philip is, in 1998, there were only around 100 million people who used the internet. And I sat with him once, and he laid out for me a vision for using the web, the internet, to make the royal family much more accessible globally.

"This was 1998. A lot of people thought, 'It's another one of his ideas. We'll pop it in the bottom drawer.'

"But he was right. Wow. And the royal website, which I oversaw when I was there, was really the start of the fundamental rebasing of the relationship, so people could get their information about the family institution, not just from great papers but also to reach out to people in different ways. So that was incredibly important."

The royal family launched its first website in March 1997. The number of people who use the internet today stands at more than six billion people. Data from the royal household shows that there were 2.1 billion social media impressions on its posts in 2025-26, up from 1.3 billion the year before. There were 432 million views of official royal videos in the same period, up from 397 million the year before.

According to Lewis, Prince Philip was the first person at the palace to recognise the power of the internet to promote the monarchy.

Lewis, a PR executive who worked at the palace on secondment from Centrica, the energy company, from 1998-2000, was hired amid criticism of the royal family over the handling of the death of Diana when it was thought that the Queen had taken too long to address the public.

After being awarded the job, Lewis was given a piece of advice from Lord Janvrin, the incoming principal private secretary to the Queen: don't start on Princess Diana's first anniversary.

Lewis said: "The date I was due to join was August 31, 1998, which was the year after the Princess of Wales [died]. The anniversary. And Robin said a quiet word. He said, 'If I was you, I wouldn't come until the September 1, because anything that happens on that day, you'll be held responsible for.' And that was very clever and wise advice."

DAVID MCHUGH/BRIGHTON PICTURES

High risk Walkers pose for pictures at Seaford Head in Sussex apparently oblivious to the dangers beneath their feet. Large cracks have appeared in the chalk cliff and a rockfall recently took place nearby

Right-wing extremism drives increase in Prevent referrals

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Nearly 10,000 people were reported to the government's anti-terror scheme last year. A sharp increase in concerns about right-wing extremism drove figures to a ten-year high.

A record 10,293 referrals were made to Prevent for 9,957 people in the year to September 2025, which included 393 children aged ten or under.

The increase marks the continuation of a trend after the Southport attack in July 2024 when Axel Rudakubana killed Bebe King, six, Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, and Alice da Silva Aguiar, nine, at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class. Officials noted a significant increase in referrals. He was referred to Prevent three times but his case was closed over a lack of clear ideology.

Extreme right-wing ideology reports jumped from 1,480 to 2,103 — making up a fifth of all those included in official statistics released yesterday. Islamist extremism referrals were lower by nearly 9 per cent, falling from 945 cases to 860, prompting claims by the Tories that the issue was being "ignored".

However, the number identified as vulnerable to radicalisation on Islamist extremism grounds and supported through a voluntary service known as Channel did increase.

Referrals for fascination with extreme violence or mass casualty attacks was 818 — 8 per cent of the total.

Some 95 reports related to "Incel" (involuntarily celibate) extremism. More than half of referrals were for no identified ideology.

Where age was known, 11 to 15-year-olds made up the largest proportion of Prevent referrals (3,655), followed by 16 to 17-year-olds (1,379), while 393 were for children aged ten or under.

The collection of data on ethnicity is not mandatory and figures cover just over half made over the past year. Of these, 3,600 were white, 949 Asian, 401 black and 365 "other".

Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, said: "Prevent is ignoring Islamist extremism, despite it remaining the deadliest terror threat ... the failure to address this and intervene is putting the public in danger.

"Prevent's role is vital to national security, but it must be fit for purpose. Labour do not have the backbone to confront this reality, and that is a national security failure."

Home Office insiders said that the number of Prevent referrals for Islamist extremism was still higher than it was in the period covered by statistics published two years ago, which they added partly overlapped with when the Conservatives were in power.

Dan Jarvis, the security minister, said: "The record number of referrals to Prevent and the increase in the threat level underlines the scale of the challenge we face in protecting the public from terrorism. We will continue to improve Prevent to ensure it has the tools it needs to do its job."

The Home Office said that the UK faces an "enduring and evolving threat from terrorism". The national threat level is severe, meaning that a terrorist attack is highly likely.

Tim Jacques, the government's independent Prevent commissioner, told BBC Radio 4's *World at One*: "The increased number of referrals, particularly those believed not to have a terrorist ideology, does create a danger of them missing something that does have a terrorist element to it, because Prevent was not created for the type of threat we are seeing today."

Jacques added: "I completely share that concern", when asked about cuts to Prevent spending.

Solicitor struck off over sexual WhatsApps

Jonathan Ames

A self-described "horny bastard" has been thrown out of the solicitors' profession and must pay a £75,000 bill for legal costs after he bombarded three women with "sexualised messages".

Michael Alexander, a senior litigation specialist, sent a string of lewd and unwanted messages to female professionals. A disciplinary tribunal found that the 63-year-old made one woman barrister feel uncomfortable by repeatedly referring to her "big bad ass" and asking for descriptions of what she was wearing. Alexander was said to have described himself as a "horny bastard" to colleagues and was found to have sent a string of sexualised gifs to a potential assistant while asking whether she was "pert or peachy".

He also messaged a heavily pregnant woman on the social media site LinkedIn, inviting her to lunch, to which she replied by suggesting that Alexander use an online dating site.

After his behaviour was reported to the solicitors' watchdog, Alexander, who qualified as a lawyer in 1988, was brought before a tribunal that has now struck him off the roll after finding him guilty of "deliberate, repeated, and persistent" misconduct.

Between 2020 and 2022 Alexander was employed by Harwood Solicitors in Blackburn when the misconduct took place. In 2022, Alexander sent a female barrister a string of "sexually motivated" WhatsApp messages he described as "banter". Alexander was repeatedly told his comments were inappropriate.

Alexander's other messages were said to have included quizzing the barrister over whether she was wearing a thong. The senior solicitor was also found to have sent a message asking whether the barrister was in bed and whether she was "commando", slang for not wearing underwear.

At the hearing he accepted that his messages were "highly inappropriate and offensive" but argued he had made no sexual advances in person.

The tribunal noted "repeated disregard of clear requests to stop, the continuation of misconduct while regulatory investigations were ongoing, victim-blaming responses, and a lack of genuine insight demonstrated over a sustained period".

Law chief's reference for paedophile

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A law chief has been sacked from a human rights quango after he gave a character reference in court for his paedophile cousin.

David Lavery, 69, was removed from the Human Rights Commission of Northern Ireland amid growing uproar that he had described his cousin, William Lloyd-Lavery, as being "happily married", having "a Christian faith" and "a person of sound judgment and good character" .

Judge Patrick Lynch KC sentenced Lloyd-Lavery, 77, to two years in prison at Belfast crown court in April, after he was found guilty on six counts of indecent assault on four schoolgirls at a Belfast school where he was teaching in the 1970s.

David Lavery is the chief executive of the Law Society of Northern Ireland

It is understood that after Sir Chris Bryant, the Northern Ireland secretary, was made aware that Lavery had given the character reference, he moved to sack him from the commission.

Lavery, the chief executive of the Law Society of Northern Ireland, published an apology for his "serious error in judgment". He also apologised for "any hurt and distress that I caused the victims in this case".

The Law Society of Northern Ireland said that it had conducted "an internal process" around the incident and would make no comment regarding Lavery's position.

Misery for passengers as power failure halts trains

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

A power failure disrupted trains yesterday across the north and Midlands with "do not travel" notices issued to some passengers.

A lunchtime power cut at the Network Rail Manchester operating centre meant that all signalling and communications on the railway temporarily went down. Train drivers were unable to receive instructions or information about the routes ahead.

The issue affected passengers travelling into and out of Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds.

The operators affected included Northern, Avanti West Coast, TransPennine Express, Transport for Wales, East Midlands Railway and CrossCountry. Northern and TransPennine Express issued notices advising customers not to travel on their services.

No trains could run from Manchester Piccadilly through to Manchester Victoria and Bolton, affecting services across the northwest network.

Power eventually returned but stranded trains needed to be taken into the nearest stations to allow passengers to get off.

Rail and train operators urged everyone planning to travel by rail today to check before they set off on their journey, either by using National Rail Enquiries or visiting their specific train operator's website for the latest travel advice.

Chris Wright, Network Rail's north west route director, said last night: "I'm extremely sorry for the disruption today and the very difficult journeys many people have experienced. Our engineers are working tirelessly to restore the signalling systems impacted by the power cut at lunchtime.

"With this work continuing this evening we're warning people to expect further disruption tomorrow morning. I'd urge people to ensure they check National Rail Enquiries before they set off on any planned journeys tomorrow, with further cancellations and delays likely."

Heidi Alexander, the transport secretary, said that she was sorry to hear passengers were affected by cancellations or delays and that she was receiving regular updates while Network Rail worked to resolve the issue.

In April, an electrical fault at Manchester Piccadilly also halted trains. An extended 12-hour closure of the railway was needed for repairs because of the "complex area where this took place, with more than 400 metres of damaged lines", National Rail said at the time.

It was reported that a fault at a distribution transformer was the cause of that power cut.

Manchester Rail Operating Centre controls all train movements over a huge area, ranging between Crewe, Carlisle, Todmodern in West Yorkshire and the border with Wales.

The Manchester facility that experienced the failure was one of 12 operating centres built to eventually manage the entire rail network, Network Rail said when it opened in 2014.

These facilities replaced 800 signal boxes and other operational locations that used to control trains.

A National Energy System Operator spokesperson said: "We are aware of an incident affecting electricity supplies to parts of the Network Rail network. The national electricity transmission system is operating normally and securely."

Rail trouble in north

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Thoroughly entitled choice

Louise Haigh's accumulation of titles has become a mouthful. As chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, minister for the Cabinet Office and first secretary of state, she doesn't need a business card so much as a medieval scroll. She has told civil servants that in official papers she wants to be known by the latter title (though round the office it's just "Lou"). It's an interesting choice. First secretary of state is her most senior title, but CDL is the more historic by some 600 years. However, it has had a mixed record among Labour holders. On the one hand you have Clement Attlee, but on the other you have Oswald Mosley. Then again, first secretary of state doesn't have an unblemished record either. The last Labour holder was Peter Mandelson.

Lately we reported that the former minister Ed Balls was suffering from the reshuffle as his wife Yvette Cooper's removal from the Foreign Office meant she was suddenly at home more. This no doubt has its delights, but it has disrupted his podcast recordings when she is "banging about in the kitchen". The new health secretary has now responded to her husband publicly. "Why is he broadcasting anywhere near the kitchen in the first place?" she said. It doesn't seem likely that Cooper's review of her husband's work is going to be used in promotional material. She also said: "Seriously, why does anybody listen to Ed?"

RAISE THE WHITE FLAG
Rupert Lowe, the leader of Restore Britain, has somehow managed to anger both monarchists and republicans. On the *Today* programme, he was asked whether the King is a white Briton, a question which he dodged as Lowe's favoured definition of having two white, British-born parents is not one which His Majesty meets. Without irony, Lowe accused the BBC's Nick Robinson of a "whitewash". However, on the other side of the constitutional divide, the Cromwell Association has had to issue a clarification distancing itself from Restore. The society which celebrates the life of the 17th century Lord Protector has been confused with Restore's exclusive Cromwell Club. There is one easy way to tell them apart: there are no prizes for guessing which one has annual subs of £2,500 and which one charges £27.

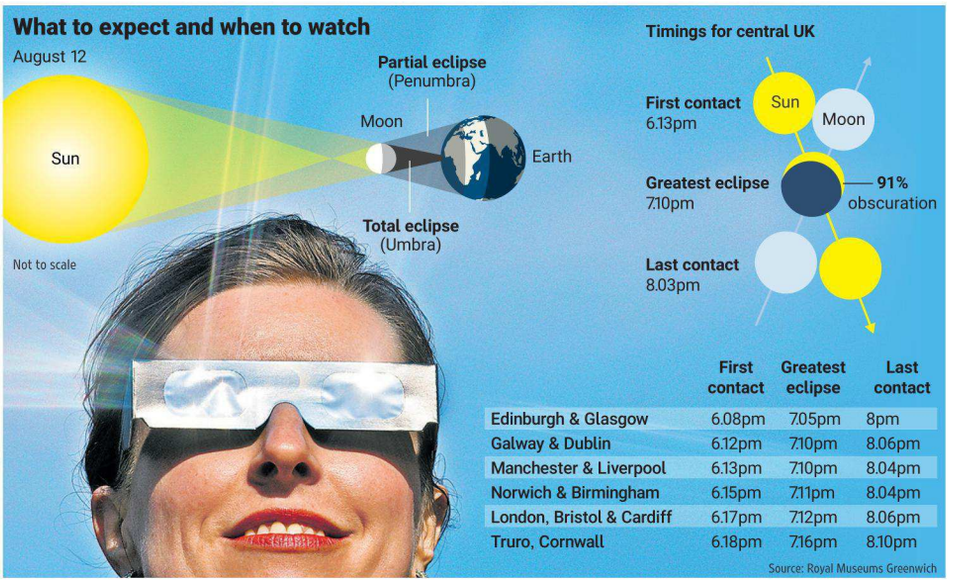
BLOND BOMBSHELL
The reason why British actors are admired across the world is that they know exactly the right amount of scenery to chew. Jason Isaacs, below, tells *Kermode on Film* that he noticed an air of competition on the sets of the *Harry Potter* films, as seasoned thesps milked everything out of their five minutes of screentime. He was sitting next to Kenneth Branagh in the make-up room one day and, as Isaacs was having a Vanessa Feltz-style blonde hairdo applied to his head, he confessed to a worry. "I think I'm being very big," Isaacs said. "Darling!" replied Branagh. "Look up and you'll see the soles of my shoes."

Some busybody at Westminster council truly uncovered hell's own dictionary when they looked at the concept of someone having a pint while stood-up and described it as "vertical drinking". The implications of this phrase are scarcely believable. As a journalist, I have come across some exceptionally heavy boozers in my time, but even they stopped drinking once they became horizontal.

JACK BLACKBURN

News

Dark art of being totally ready for the partial eclipse



	First contact	Greatest eclipse	Last contact
Edinburgh & Glasgow	6.08pm	7.05pm	8pm
Galway & Dublin	6.12pm	7.10pm	8.06pm
Manchester & Liverpool	6.13pm	7.10pm	8.04pm
Norwich & Birmingham	6.15pm	7.11pm	8.04pm
London, Bristol & Cardiff	6.17pm	7.12pm	8.06pm
Truro, Cornwall	6.18pm	7.16pm	8.10pm

Source: Royal Museums Greenwich

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

Next Wednesday, Britain will experience the most spectacular solar eclipse in a generation. As much as 96 per cent of the solar disc will be obscured by the moon, turning the sky eerily dim.

The next partial eclipse won't be until 2050. For the next total eclipse visible from mainland Britain, when the sun will be completely hidden, you must wait until September 23, 2090.

There will be an astronomical encore. A few hours after the partial eclipse ends, the Perseid meteor shower will approach its annual peak beneath skies left dark by the new moon.

The International Meteor Organisation predicts maximum activity next Thursday, making the night of August 12-13 one of the most promising observing nights of the decade — provided, as ever, that the clouds co-operate. So how should you watch it?

WHAT TIME IS THE SOLAR ECLIPSE?

It will begin shortly after 6pm on Wednesday, August 12, with the precise time varying by location.

It starts at about 6.08pm in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 6.10pm in Belfast, 6.13pm in Manchester and Liverpool, 6.15pm in Birmingham, and 6.17pm in London. Further southwest, first contact will be at about 6.18pm in Cornwall.

Maximum eclipse follows roughly an hour later: about 7.05pm in Edinburgh, 7.08pm in Belfast, 7.10pm in Manchester, 7.11pm in Birmingham and about 7.12pm in London and Cardiff. It will largely be over shortly after 8pm.

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO WATCH THE ECLIPSE IN THE UK?

The southwest will experience the greatest eclipse: about 95.8 per cent of the sun will be covered at Land's End, 95.6 per cent at Lizard Point and 96.5 per cent at Bishop Rock in the Isles of Scilly. Cardiff and Belfast will see about 93 per cent, while London, Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh will see roughly 91 per cent. Even Shetland should receive a deep eclipse, although the obscuration there will be nearer 88 per cent.

Professor Catherine Heymans, the astronomer royal for Scotland, says the difference between 91 and 96 per cent is far less important than whether you have clear skies. "My plan is going to be to watch the Met Office cloud-cover forecast to see where the clouds are going to be, and to go to where they are not," she said. "I will be ready in my car to drive north, south, east or west."

WHERE SHOULD YOU WATCH?

The eclipse will be low in the evening sky, taking place as the sun descends towards the west or northwest horizon.

A line of buildings, woodland or even a gentle hill could hide the final stages completely. "The sun is going to be setting, getting closer to the horizon as the eclipse occurs," Heymans said. "If you've got houses in your way, then you're not going to be able to see it."

Her advice, if you can, is to hold a rehearsal. Visit a location on the previous evening between 6pm and 8pm. If the setting sun is plainly visible, it should work. The sun's position will alter only slightly from one evening to the next.

HOW SHOULD YOU SAFELY WATCH THE ECLIPSE AND DO YOU NEED GLASSES?

Don't look at the sun with the naked eye, because you can severely and permanently burn your retina.

The simplest method to stay safe is to use eclipse glasses bearing the ISO 12312-2 safety standard. You can order them online. Check your eclipse glasses before you use them. Discard them if the filters are scratched, torn or punctured. Check children are wearing them properly; look away from the sun before removing them. Ordinary sunglasses, smoked glass, exposed photographic film and improvised filters should not be used.

For families without glasses, indirect projection is another option. Stand with the sun behind you and allow sunlight to pass through the holes in a kitchen colander onto a piece of white paper. Each hole will project a tiny image of the eclipsed sun.

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Dismay at Amanda Knox comedy show

Carla Jenkins

The sister of Meredith Kercher has backed a petition calling for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe to cancel a show by Amanda Knox.

Stephanie Kercher said she "could not fathom" how rape and murder could be the subject of a comedy gig.

A petition launched by a friend of the Kercher family claims that Knox's show, which is due to debut at the Gilded Balloon Teviot venue this weekend, turns the student's death in 2007 into entertainment.

Knox was convicted in 2009 of the murder of the 21-year-old in Perugia, Italy, before her acquittal two years later. She has written books and appeared in documentaries about her experience. Stephanie Kercher said: "Imagine 20 years after Meredith's death, your pain is turned into someone else's laughter. My sister's tragedy is being used to debut a comedy show this weekend in Edinburgh of all places by the very person who was questioned and taken to the legal system by Italian prosecution.

"I'm very aware that in high-profile cases everyone has their own opinions on guilt and innocence and I also agree with freedom of speech.

"However, when someone is still using Meredith's name to support themselves, and furthermore, when a comedy is linked to an individual case and individual person, I cannot fathom how rape and murder can be laughed about and I cannot understand how one person's behaviour at the police station can be the subject of the comedy show."

Amanda Knox says a petition calling for the cancellation of her Edinburgh Fringe show has mischaracterised it

Knox defended the performance on Instagram, releasing a statement that said the petition made "false assumptions and mischaracterises the show".

Sally Alington, who has known the Kercher family for many years, started a petition on Change.org calling on the Gilded Balloon and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe to withdraw *Cartwheel* — a show billed as stand-up comedy with "adult" themes, which is centred around the case. The petition has been signed by more than 4,000 people.

In an interview this week, Knox said she believed that her former flatmate would have found the show "funny".

Now living in rural Washington with her husband and two children, Knox, 39, said the show was about her wrongful imprisonment and how she would explain her past life to her daughter. The show is named *Cartwheel* after media reports at the time that said Knox had "turned cartwheels" in the police station when she was taken in for questioning. She denies this was the case.

Alington said: "This isn't just wholly inappropriate and hurtful to family and friends of Meredith, this goes far beyond that. It normalises and trivialises violence against women."

Gilded Balloon said it had no comment beyond a statement given last month in defence of hosting the show.

It said: "The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is an open-access festival. As a Fringe venue, we provide a platform for a wide range of voices, in line with the Fringe's long-standing commitment to freedom of expression."

Acosta still dancing up a storm at 53

Dance Debra Craine

Myths and Modern Masters
Royal Opera House (160 min)
★★★★★

HELEN MAYBANKS

Carlos Acosta and Max Maslen in The Moor's Pavane

This is Carlos Acosta's night. And what a night! Yes, *Myths and Modern Masters* may be a chance to see him back on the Royal Opera House stage at the age of 53. But it's more than that. With help from the two companies he directs — Birmingham Royal Ballet and Acosta Danza — the Cuban star has curated an outstanding, wonderfully diverse and hugely entertaining showcase for dance.

We begin with the man himself, in striking purple, making his debut in an American modern dance classic. José Limón's *The Moor's Pavane* (1949) cleverly distils Shakespeare's *Othello* into 20 minutes, styling it as an Elizabethan courtly dance for the four central characters and setting it to music by Purcell (played by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, conducted by Paul Murphy).

Acosta's stature and charisma were undimmed on opening night, as the Moor's dangerous passions lurked beneath his polite surface. Beatrice Parma's innocent wife Desdemona suffered quietly; Max Maslen relished his victory as the schemer Iago; Miki Mizutani was his seductive wife Emilia.

Acosta's *The Nutcracker in Havana Suite* is a chance for his Cuban-based Acosta Danza to light up Covent Garden. The ballet's national dances are reimagined in his spirited, Latin-flavoured choreography; plus there's a conga, even a clog dance (a nod to *La Fille mal gardée*). Acosta orchestrated the fun as Drosselmeyer, accompanied by his 14-year-old daughter Aila Acosta Holland as Clara. A Birmingham Royal Ballet couple, Parma and Enrique Bejarano Vidal, danced the pas de deux for the Sugar Plum Fairy and her prince, very traditional and beautifully polished.

Another BRB couple — Katherine Ochoa and Yasiel Hodelín Bello — triumphed in Agrippina Vaganova's *Diana and Actaeon* duet. Bello was high-powered, while Ochoa was phenomenal, not only delivering the virtuosic classical choreography with ease but daring it to go a step further.

Acosta partnered Amisaday Naara in *Nosotros*, a contemporary duet by Beatriz Garcia and Raúl Reinoso in which emotions are on high alert. The erratic lighting took some of the edge off their fractured relationship but the years faded away in Acosta's lithe and poignant dancing.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster* (1991) closes the show in swaggering fashion. Set to songs by the Rolling Stones, Bruce's sexy, witty battle of the sexes parodies the preening vanity of the men and celebrates their long-suffering female partners. The ten-strong cast were a joy but it was a splendid Acosta, strutting like Mick Jagger and dancing up a storm, who stole the show.

Royal Opera House, London, to Sunday, rbo.org.uk

BBC advertising plan alarms rivals

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Introducing adverts to BBC podcasts such as *The Archers* is a bad idea that would negatively affect audiences and commercial rivals, a coalition of media businesses has warned.

The group, which includes Gary Lineker's Goalhanger and publishers Guardian Media Group and News UK, owner of The Times, has written to Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, to warn her about the "damaging" impact of the government proposals.

The government raised the prospect of the broadcaster introducing adverts into digital products including its website and the streaming services BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds to improve its financial sustainability in a green paper about the future of the broadcaster published last year.

"[Consider] allowing the BBC to carry limited advertising on its online platforms where advertising revenues are growing," the paper said.

"The BBC could be allowed to carry advertising on certain parts of bbc.co.uk, such as entertainment and sport pages, or on older BBC iPlayer and BBC Sounds content."

But the proposed change has alarmed rivals, which urged Nandy to rule it out. Matt Payton, chief executive officer of industry body Radiocentre, said: "Pressing ahead with this ill-conceived proposal in face of the evidence would only succeed in damaging home-grown audio businesses, while raising limited additional funds for the BBC. We urge the government to now rule out this proposal which would be deeply unpopular with audiences."

Radiocentre considers the move to be a "high-risk, low-reward proposition", which would generate around £10 million a year according to estimates by analysts Compass Lexecon.

While the impact on the finances of the BBC, which generated revenues of almost £6 billion last year, would be "negligible", there are fears that it would have a material impact on smaller audio rivals.

Last year the BBC backtracked on plans to introduce adverts into some of its most popular podcasts after an outcry from the industry.

A BBC spokesperson said at the time that it had ruled out the proposals after a consultation.

"We will continue to support the audio sector and the wider market, investing in the best ideas and developing production capabilities across the UK," they said.

Victory in battle to save flag flown at Trafalgar

David Brown
Chief News Correspondent

A descendant of Admiral Lord Nelson's second-in-command at the Battle of Trafalgar has welcomed the saving of the ship's Union Flag, which will be displayed in Newcastle.

The flag was flown from HMS Royal Sovereign, flagship of Vice-Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, at the battle in 1805. It was due to be sent abroad after being sold last year but an export ban was put in place due to its significance.

North East Museums has raised more than two-thirds of its £700,000 target to purchase the flag and create a permanent home for it at the Discovery Museum. Collingwood was born in Newcastle and recruited many of his sailors there. Susan Collingwood-Cameron, a great-great-great niece, said: "This flag is said to have been made by sailors on board the ship, many of whom came from Tyneside and were affectionately referred to by him as his 'Tars of the Tyne'. It will be a tribute to them and the important role they played in one of our greatest moments."

The flag will go on show in Newcastle

News

Only 14 per cent of rivers in good health

Clean it up
CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

Ben Cooke Environment Correspondent

Fewer rivers are in good ecological condition now than in 2019, as the government looks set to miss its target of improving their health by the end of next year.

The first assessment by the Environment Agency of the state of Britain's rivers, lakes and coastal waters since 2019 has revealed that only 14 per cent of rivers are rated as being in good condition, a two percentage point decline.

The results show the government is almost certain to miss its target of bringing just over three quarters of rivers up to good ecological condition by the end of next year.

The government attributed the decline to changes in the way river health is assessed and argued that the new results show rivers are in roughly the same condition now as in 2019 — the last time it concluded a survey of the country's rivers and lakes.

The survey revealed the extent of the damage to England's rivers not only from sewage pollution but also pesticides and fertilisers from farmed fields and toxic "forever chemicals" found in flame retardants and cosmetics. The agency found that every water body in England was polluted with such chemicals and that phosphate — from farm run-off and sewage — is the biggest cause of river pollution in Britain.

Angela Eagle, the environment secretary, said the results underlined the need for "wholesale change" across the water sector. "Our local communities deserve to have clean local rivers and lakes. We've already introduced landmark legislation to hold water companies to account, secured record investment to help fix infrastructure, and are laser-focused on long term reforms that will prevent future failures," she said.

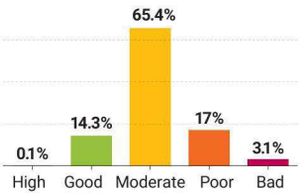
But James Wallace, the chief executive of the campaign group River Action, said "despite successive governments' promises, nothing has changed".

Industry body Water UK said water firms were investing a record £22 billion in environmental improvements by 2030, the largest amount of money ever spent on the natural environment.

The Times' Clean It Up campaign calls for tougher regulation to improve Britain's waterways.

Troubled waters

The ecological status of England's 4,658 surface water bodies



Source: Environment Agency

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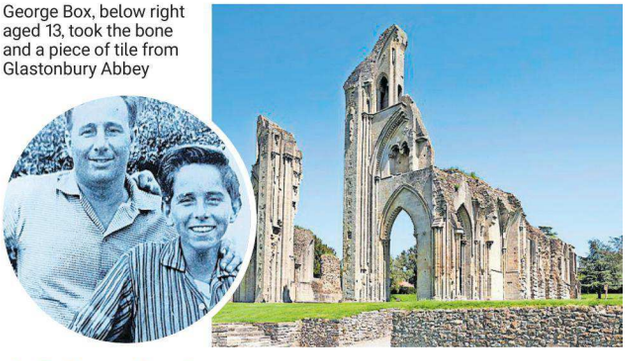


George Box, below right aged 13, took the bone and a piece of tile from Glastonbury Abbey

Abbot's kneecap returned 70 years after boy's theft

An abbot's kneecap which was stolen by an 11-year-old boy on a school trip to Glastonbury Abbey 70 years ago has been returned to Somerset (Mark Ludlow writes).

George Box, from Brent Knoll, ducked under the ropes at an archaeological dig in 1956 and "helped himself" from an opened tomb. The bone was the kneecap of a 13th century abbot which Box later kept in pride of place in a glass cabinet at his home in Australia, having emigrated in the 1970s.

Shortly before he died last year, Box confessed to his wife and they agreed that it should be returned.

Lucy Newman, from the abbey, said the date of the school trip matched that of a dig in which the tombs of several abbots had been opened.

The only hitch was that they had no idea to whom the bone belonged, and could only reunite kneecap and owner by "exhuming them all and seeing how many knee bones they all have", she said.

"The photographs we've got of the [excavated] tombs, we don't know whether they were taken before or after a schoolboy climbed in and helped himself to a bone," Newman told the BBC.

Exhumation could "disturb more archaeology than would benefit from an abbot being reunited with his kneecap" and end up "giving another abbot three kneecaps".

Box's widow said her "scallywag" husband had "helped himself" and took a fragment of medieval floor tile too. "As a child he never told anyone what he had done," she said.

The kneecap and the tile fragment are displayed in the abbey's museum.

Vertical drinking curbs? Pubgoers call it madness

Ed Halford, Hamish McCorriston

It's just after 2pm at The French House in Soho and word has reached drinkers that licensing proposals set out by Westminster council speak of clamping down on "vertical drinking" or, in non-official speak, standing up while nursing a pint.

As the news caused some to splutter out a few sips of beer, which the pub traditionally serves in half-pint glasses, Graham McPherson, better known as Suggs, the lead singer of Madness, was bemused. "Can this be real?" he asked. "What's the council going to do, then? Provide some benches or sofas when it's packed? Where are they going to make the space for horizontal drinking? Westminster council, I think, should be put horizontal."

The proposals have come as a surprise given that Soho's bars, clubs, pubs and restaurants are often full to bursting. They should, the council says, "discourage excessive drunkenness and encourage the provision of more seating in premises that serve alcohol for people to sit and enjoy a drink and order food by table service in place of open bar space that caters for high volume vertical drinking".

The opening of new pubs and bars in what the council calls the "cumulative impact zone", which cover Soho and large parts of the West End, is also set to be banned.

Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, said the proposals were "more evidence that restrictive and anti-growth policies aren't working". A spokesperson said the government was giving Khan new powers to call in licensing decisions "to protect London's vital nightlife and hospitality industries".

Lesley Helen Lewis, 71, who has been The French House's landlady for 37 years, said: "It's about sanitising Soho and making it the same as elsewhere in the world. Soho has always been about the feeling of freedom and there's never been any prejudice towards other people. If it comes to it then we will fight to the bitter end as British people don't really like being told what to do."

At The Ship & Shovell, Martin Kaufman, 78, said: "One of the great vibrant things about London pub life is the ability to be free to mingle and talk. Pubs are closing down every week so it seems silly to restrict people's ability to enjoy themselves." Harry Broomby, 26, said: "I think it's part of the culture and it's what people visit England for."

Jeremy Joseph, the owner of Heaven, closed his G-A-Y Bar in Soho last year, citing the council's restrictive licensing among the reasons. On the new proposals, he said: "My immediate reaction is how much more damage can you try to create for hospitality?" Joseph estimated that were the council to require drinkers to be seated, outdoor capacity would drop by 70 per cent and "the pubs can't survive".

Gary Henshaw, 62, who has run the LGBT venue Ku for 30 years, said policies should be tailored to each establishment.

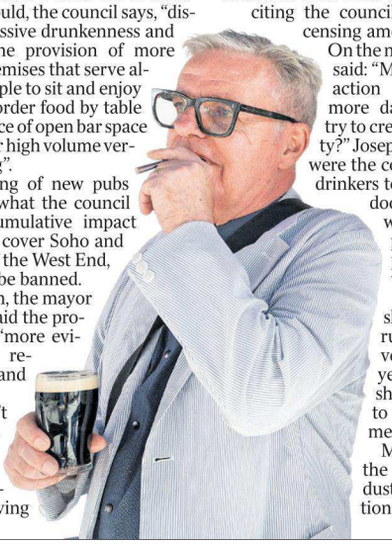
Michael Kill, of the Night Time Industries Association, said: "Standing in a pub is not a licensing issue. It's part of British culture."

Tim Barnes, the council's deputy leader, said there had been a "wilful misreading" of the propsals. "Our guidance is simply about encouraging venues to manage their customers so people don't pack onto pavements or excessive drinking doesn't disturb others passing by."

Foolish puritans, leading article, page 27

LUCY YOUNG FOR THE TIMES

Suggs, below, the Madness singer, was among Soho drinkers deriding the plans



University vice-chancellor sacked amid fraud inquiry

Sian Bradley

The long-serving vice-chancellor of the University of Greater Manchester has been fired, weeks after he was arrested under investigation for the alleged misuse of funds.

Professor George Holmes was arrested by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) on July 8 in connection with a "significant and complex investigation" into the alleged misuse of up to £1.7 million in university funds.

Andrew Roberts, chairman of the board of governors, informed staff on Wednesday that "Dr George Holmes's contract as vice-chancellor has been ended by the governing body of the university", according to an email seen by the Manchester Mill. The email continued: "Dr Holmes is therefore no longer an employee of the university."

In the interim, Dr Greg Walker remains acting vice-chancellor and the board of governors will need to convene to appoint a permanent head of the institution.

The university confirmed Holmes's contract was terminated "earlier this week" in a statement to The Mill.

Holmes, who was appointed to the institution in 2005, when it was called the University of Bolton, was suspended in May last year. The university apparently described his suspension as a "precautionary measure" that did not imply "any assumption of guilt".

Police say they opened their investigation a year ago after allegations from PricewaterhouseCoopers and the university's fraud response panel. Last year GMP said that officers had begun investigating "suspected fraud and bribery". They carried out arrest warrants at two addresses in Bolton and three others in Lancashire, Humberside and West Yorkshire, arresting two men in their sixties and a woman in her fifties.

Professor George Holmes had been vice-chancellor since 2005

The investigation involves approximately £1 million worth of fraudulent activity between 2014 and 2025 across 60 transactions and more than a million emails.

It has not yet been made clear which potential offences apply to Holmes.

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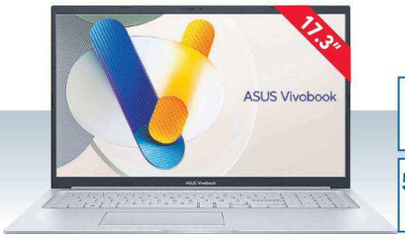

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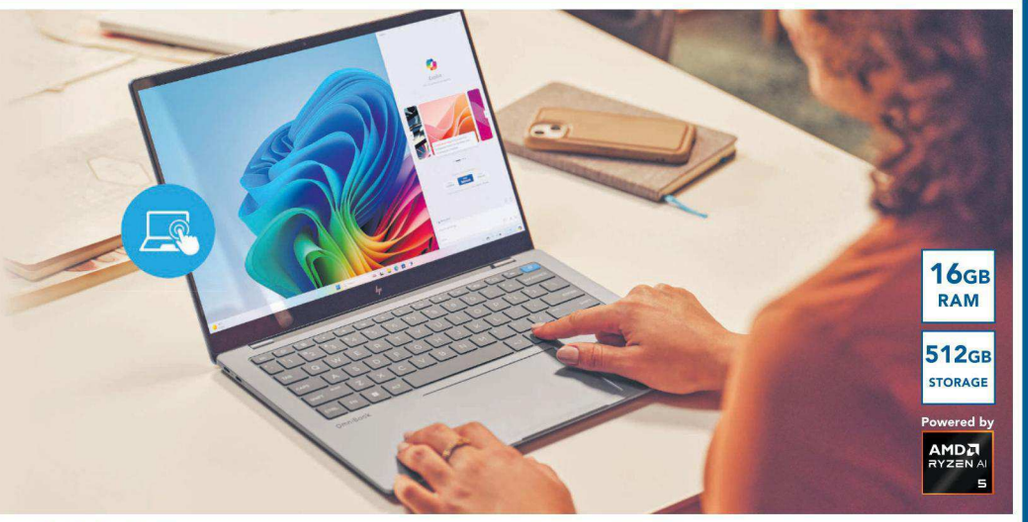

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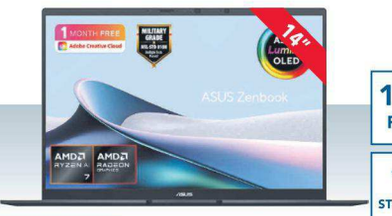

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Holt Heath in Dorset is still charred a year on from a devastating fire. Much of the land has not seen regrowth or recovery

Nature reserve is 'moonscape' a year after fire

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

The majority of a Dorset nature reserve burnt by a wildfire last year has not recovered and is a scorched "moonscape", conservationists have found.

Surveys of Holt Heath by ecologists at the National Trust revealed about 70 per cent of the land was still charred one year on from the blaze.

The slow bounceback bodes ill for Dunwich Heath in Suffolk, a trust site which suffered a devastating wildfire last week. The heath was burnt after a fire ignited in the RSPB's neighbouring Minsmere reserve.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service still has a major live incident in place. Despite no visible signs of fire, firefighters remain on site because of the risk from heat beneath the ground and smouldering vegetation.

This year's hot and dry weather, including the driest July on record in England, exacerbated the fire and is believed to be why the Dorset reserve has not recovered.

In the most heavily burnt areas the Dorset fire, believed at the time to have been started deliberately, did not just clear vegetation but also burnt through the fragile surface layer of soil. That left extensive areas of bare sand exposed, which are vulnerable to wind and rain erosion and lack the nutrients needed for plants to take root.

The recovery has been hampered by the weather, the trust said. With half of England in drought, the lack of rain means any fragile new growth has struggled to survive.

Ellie Egan, countryside manager for the National Trust at Holt Heath and the Kingston Lacy Estate, said: "While some areas are beginning to recover naturally, the damage was far more severe in places than we would typically expect, and parts of the heath still look very much like a 'moonscape' and these will require careful, long-term management if they are to recover successfully."

The conservation and heritage charity is conducting a study on how to best kick-start the soil's recovery.

Holt Heath is a site of special scientific interest (SSSI), representing a portion of lowland heathland, one of the UK's rarest habitats. Dunwich Heath is also lowland heathland, so the study could inform its restoration too.

The Dorset site has historically supported large populations of heathland birds, such as the Dartford warbler, nightjar, stonechat, woodlark and curlew.

It is also famous for being home to all six native UK reptile species. This includes the very rare sand lizard and smooth snake, alongside the adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm.

The rare reptiles, Dartford warbler and stonechat suffered severely from the loss of nesting and feeding grounds. However, nightjars are still present and have been heard making mating calls, known as "churring", in the area.

In 2023, a controlled burn on Holt Heath by the trust got out of control and destroyed about seven acres (three hectares) of land. It was the first time that had happened in two decades of intentional burning.

Last year was the UK's worst on record for wildfires, and the country experienced its first "megafire". This year has not been much better, as about 56,460 acres (22,850 hectares) have been burnt, making it currently the third worst on record.

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Charlotte Church fights for her woodland school

David Brown Chief News Correspondent

Charlotte Church is appealing for permission to continue operating a woodland school for a "tribe" of children seeking an alternative education.

The Welsh singer's Awen Project charity runs an education centre for homeschooled children in a former piggery at Oaktree Farm in Wenvoe, Vale of Glamorgan.

Church, 40, founded the charity in 2019 after taking her own children out of mainstream schools in 2016. She has a daughter Ruby, 18, and a son, Dexter, 17, with Gavin Henson, the former Wales rugby player, and a daughter, Frida, six, with her present partner, Jonathan Powell, a musician.

Its website describes the "Awen Tribe" as a "self-directed, consent-based learning community". It has been operating at Wenvoe since October 2024 and applied for planning permission to change its use from an agricultural to a non-residential institution last August. The application was refused over concerns about road safety, noise and a lack of ecological reports.

In its appeal, the project says: "The fact that children make sound when they are learning, whether that is singing and playing instruments or making excited cries at having discovered something that chimes with their passions, is a terrible reason to argue against them having a place to learn."

The appeal is due to be heard by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales.

The Welsh singer runs the Awen Project

In an era of political needling, Be More Bayeux
Laura Freeman
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Comment

No early release from Burnham's first big test

Can PM make a success out of Starmer's failure on prisoners? Unlike his predecessor he is trying to take voters with him

Patrick Maguire
@PATRICKKMAGUIRE

Last week, in a difficult meeting on the early release of prisoners, Andy Burnham gave officials a taste of his political essence. "I just don't think the public are going to believe that," he told them, emphatically, after yet another rehearsal of all of Whitehall's objections to his plans to keep some offenders inside. "They're just not going to thank me for that."

It is often said, derisively, that this prime minister's great weakness is his need to be liked. Here is an intractable crisis of public policy, of prisons at 98 per cent capacity, demanding impossible political choices. And there is Burnham fretting about his own reception as the architecture of state collapses around him.

Sir Keir Starmer, by contrast, took his cues from Harry Storer, Brian Clough's first mentor in football management. Storer told the young Clough that his vocation was lonelier than it looked: "Nobody ever says thank you." Rather like Enoch Powell's shopworn maxim on political careers and failure, it was a check on great expectations of gratitude and affirmation. Nobody on the terraces or in the polling booths ever says thank you, so don't act like you can force them to.

We saw that when Starmer confronted this same question two summers ago. One of his first meetings in office was with an emotional group of prison governors. They pleaded with him to go ahead with early releases, however unpopular, because the alternative was collapse. Shabana Mahmood, then the justice secretary, said much the same. And so Starmer, to quote one adviser present for those discussions, "did the right thing". It was what the experts and the data said was necessary.

Nobody said thank you. In a few years, once the harsh medicine on prisons and much else had time to work, perhaps they might. But the opposite came to pass. Starmer's government was forced to take hard and unpopular decisions because of its inheritance, that much is true, but their unpopularity was no less of a political risk. He internalised too much of Storer's mantra too quickly. Nobody ever says thank you, so there's no point pretending I can do anything else.

"He'd have scoffed at saying we were going to stop it," says a former aide of Starmer on early release,

> Close aides in No 10 speak of the PM's 'public conscience test'

"because, he'd say, we'll be back doing it very soon anyway." The result was a government that looked as if it had given up on itself. It promised change but too often delivered passivity.

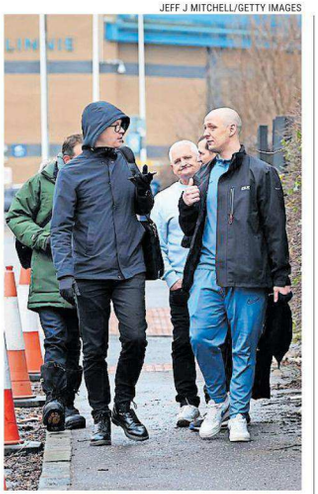
On prison places, Burnham's inheritance is scarcely less grisly and the limited exemptions he has introduced to the early release scheme reflect that. Only rapists, "serious" child sex offenders and groomers will still have to serve two-thirds of their sentence while police killers and serious domestic abusers could still be freed after only half. What has changed is not so much the substance of the policy, which is still as foul and sticky as ever, but the style of the leadership.

When Burnham has spoken in those meetings of the public's disbelief, or his fears for their reaction, the issue at stake is not popularity but trust and consent. Close aides in No 10 speak of his "public conscience test" on early releases. He first clocked this fight was coming when campaigning for Makerfield and, of everything that has crossed his desk in his first weeks as prime minister, it is this that has commanded most of his time and attention. Most days his schedule of meetings has run, to the concern of officials fearful of fatigue and diminishing returns, past 9pm.

But the alternative was to tell the public that government could do nothing to stop early releases that many consider a moral outrage. As he has sought to show on the cost of living, this early phase of Burnham's premiership is self-consciously demonstrative: that he is listening, that he has tried, that he has managed, despite nothing much having changed, to do something, however modest and however difficult the supplementary questions and edge cases thrown up. It is the opposite of fatalistic — some on Whitehall would say naively, self-defeatingly so. It assumes, actually, that somebody, somewhere, might end up saying thank you.

The contrast with Labour's last go at this is instructive for, on the substance, it isn't a sharp contrast at all. Starmer's government ended up exempting several categories of sex offenders, domestic abusers and stalkers from early release. They had initially been included in the scheme but, at a testy Cobra meeting after the 2024 election, Yvette Cooper, the home secretary, argued that public consent would collapse if offences

JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES



Releasing prisoners early wins no friends, as the prime minister knows

against women were deemed insufficiently serious to warrant exclusion. And nobody, she said, had sought to explain to the public why early releases were necessary — or that the Tories had been planning to do similar.

And so nobody said thank you: not for the action to save the prison system from anarchy, nor for the exclusion of the offenders still locked up. It was reactive, piecemeal, all imposed upon the prime minister behind closed doors. A year later, in May 2025, Cooper again sought to deny serious sex offenders, child sex offenders and the worst domestic abusers from eligibility for release. She sent a nine-page memo making the case to Starmer and Mahmood on the eve of a cabinet committee meeting, but this time it was no use. The prime minister deferred to the people in charge of the prisons, and here we are now.

What comes next is the first big test case for Burnhamism. The new style has collided with the old substance. As the prime minister himself says, he has not kept anywhere near as many criminals inside as he, or the public, would have liked. Starmer's own preference, incidentally, was to authorise the early releases himself before leaving office. He thought it

> Survivors of the last government say it's prolonging his pain

might make his successor's life a little easier, and help save Labour's face come inevitable disappointment. The offer was declined because Burnham, as he told me the day before he entered No 10, is "going to try to do things in a different way".

He admits he has not entirely succeeded and is sensitive to public outrage on the things he has not yet fixed: hence why, at Burnham's instruction this week, Ministry of Justice officials are now trawling through old paper records of child sex offences to identify grooming gang members who could go free under an unforeseen loophole.

Burnham is pushing officials to find new solutions and new answers to the questions that defeated his predecessor. This week has shown he may end up landing in the same territory. But he is trying to take the voters with him. Survivors of the last government say it's prolonging his pain unnecessarily — that he's made it his problem, and his failure, and that nobody ever says thank you. On this and every other legacy battle to come Burnham's bet is he can prove them wrong.

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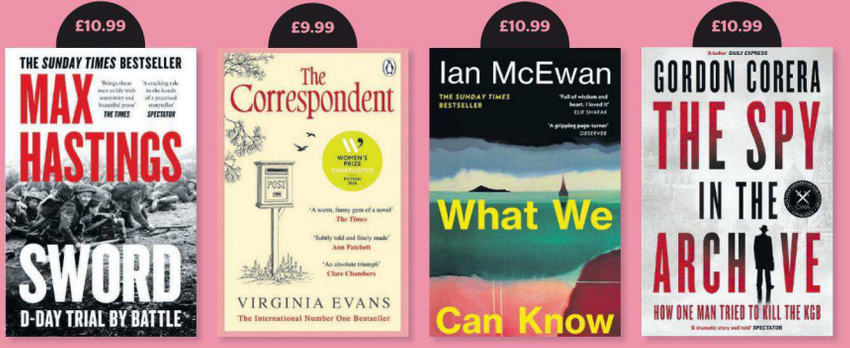

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Comment

In an era of political needling, Be More Bayeux

Tapestry embodies magnanimity over triumphalism: a lesson for today's baying mobs and ghouls

Laura Freeman

There are only, as any schoolboy knows, two dates in English history. The first is 55BC, in which year Julius Caesar landed at Thanet. The second is 1066, when William, Duke of Normandy, conquered England at the Battle of Hastings. If your knowledge extends a little, but only a little, beyond all that you will know that the battle is commemorated in the Bayeux Tapestry and that Harold gets one in the eye from the French. Biff, baff, boff. Or even biffe, baffe, bouffe.

This person of little knowledge, schooled in Sellar and Yeatman and not much else, is not entirely hypothetical. A few weeks ago, it was me. Good on the Georgians, not so hot on the IIth century.

In anticipation of the exhibition of the millennium, I have been mugging up on the Bayeux Tapestry, already in situ, but not yet in public sight, at the British Museum.

Like most things one knows little about, the little I knew was wrong. A month ago, I would have told you that the tapestry (an embroidery, really, as any schoolgirl who has sewn a sampler would know) is a 70-metre exercise in Norman propaganda. A yah-boo-sucks to the defeated English. A stitched staking-of-the-claim to the English throne. Normans 1, Anglo-Saxons 0. The English just as weeny, weedy and weaky as the last bloke to conquer us thought.

How boring 70 metres of that would be. The story is, of course, far more complicated, as coiling as the trees that divide the scenes. The tapestry was, in modern parlance, an Anglo-French co-production. Commissioned by the winners, almost certainly stitched by the losers. Sympathies lie now with one side, now the other.

One of the themes modern scholars like to stress is magnanimity over triumphalism. Well, they would, wouldn't they, when the loan is a diplomatic as well as a curatorial coup. It's certainly there, though: even-handedness, grief for the fallen enemy, respect for his achievements. The English may drink too much (look at those drinking horns) but they are pious, pray in splendid churches, build magnificent abbeys, and are tactical in battle. The English shield wall, impenetrable until it wasn't, is given a fine showing.

> I shrink from the witch hunt and exultation at Jason Arday's downfall

Harold is not the great betrayer who deserves his sticky, pointy end, but a complicated man, now heroic, now duplicitous, a brother-in-arms to William, a man caught between two kings.

In the little King Penguin book on the Bayeux Tapestry I bought in a secondhand bookshop years ago, on the principle that you should always pick up a Penguin, the author Eric Maclagan writes of Harold: "It is not as a Judas that he fills the stage, though perhaps as a Macbeth; a brave man led by ambition into disloyalty".

When two of Harold's brothers are killed on the battlefield, the birds in the border above seem to cry out. Some of the English flee; others bravely defend their redoubt. By the time we reach the final stretch of the battle, the fallen Norman and English soldiers are indistinguishable, maimed and equally mourned.

It is thrillingly cinematic, ingeniously suspenseful and rich in twists and turns. The exhibition opens on September 10. Only 34 sleeps to go.

I hesitate to use a 1,000-year-old wonder of western art as a modern motivational mantra, but "Be More Bayeux" isn't a bad message. Magnanimity is in short supply in our age of cheap shots and screengrab gotchas. The enemy stumbles, misspeaks, comes a cropper on the morning news round, and troops bay for their blood.

When I heard earlier this week that the Sunday Times and Spectator columnist Rod Liddle had died, my first thought was "how they'll be crowing online". And they were, on X and on Bluesky: gleeful, vengeful, hoping it was a painful death, threatening anyone who posted tributes or acclamations. The same grave-dancing ghoulishness we saw with Ann Widdecombe a month ago.

Do I warm to Jason Arday, the discredited Cambridge professor with his tall tales and eye-stretching lies? Not particularly. But I also shrink from the spectacle of the witch-hunt and the exultation at his downfall.

Politics increasingly seems to be a series of sour skirmishes and petty victories fought on an online battlefield. The president of the US would not recognise magnanimity if it cantered towards him in chainmail. Elon Musk calls the editor of the Economist, Zanny Minton Beddoes, a "traitor to the West". (She, restrainedly, says she is "bemused" by his response.) Treachery is a popular theme. Reform's Zia Yusuf has called Labour and Conservative politicians "traitors to their country".

Zack Polanski, meanwhile, reposted a photograph of a man wearing a T-shirt showing a guillotine and the slogan: "We're only making plans for Nigel". Spits and spats, tit for tat, axe against axe. None of them better than my three-year-old daughter who, reaching the top of any climbing frame, announces: "nerr-nerr, nerr, nerr-nerr, can't catch me-ee!". Playground triumphalism is now the grown-up norm.

You might say: magnanimous the tapestry may be, but it is still a smooth bit of broadcasting. After the Battle of Hastings, there was a certain amount of laying waste to the countryside and marching on Berkhamsted. But never let the wider historical context get in the way of the general sword thrust of a column.

My husband, who takes a wonkish interest in US politics, likes to cite the example of John McCain at a Republican rally in 2008, courteously but insistently defending Barack Obama. "He's a decent family man and citizen," said McCain, "that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues." Less than two decades ago, but such magnanimity seems a relic of the distant past.

Laura Freeman is chief art critic

THUNDERER

Torture is wrong in any circumstances — I should know

John McCarthy

Almost 35 years ago to the day, I came home after spending more than five years as a hostage in Lebanon. During that time I was beaten, blindfolded and chained up in darkened underground rooms. I was held in solitary confinement and subjected to torture.

As a survivor of torture, I became a member of a club no one wishes to join. I know what it does to a person, how it denies humanity and strips away dignity. While physical scars may fade, the memory is impossible to erase. And that is why the latest YouGov polling commissioned by the human rights organisation Freedom from Torture troubles me so deeply.

One in five British people who expressed a view believe there are some circumstances in which torture can be acceptable. I find that difficult to understand.

The UK has long stood, rightly and proudly, against torture. The absolute ban is one of our clearest moral lines: a recognition that there are some things we must never do to another human being, whatever the circumstances. Its global evolution is in no small part down to leadership by the UK that stretches back hundreds of years. It makes it all the more shocking that some people in this country believe this principle can be negotiable.

Most people cannot imagine what it is like to be powerless in the hands of another person, to have your agency stripped away and to believe you may not survive. Like most torturers, my kidnappers believed they had good cause. That's why the absolute ban must remain untouchable. The moment any exception is contemplated, we are all at risk.

It is easy to condemn torture when thinking about the actions of a distant dictator. It is harder when we are frightened, angry or convinced that exceptional circumstances, closer to home, demand exceptional measures. But the moment fundamental human rights are treated as politically inconvenient we stand on the brink of losing our humanity.

The UK does not have a perfect record but for generations Britain has been a leading voice against torture on the global stage. Now there are more conflicts around the world than since the Second World War, we must continue to be vigilant. Upholding the absolute ban reflects some of the best qualities of our country. We must protect and preserve it at all costs. I know where the other side of that line leads. I have lived there. It is unbearable and it can never be justified.

I urge anyone who thinks torture is acceptable in certain circumstances to reconsider. There are no right circumstances for torture.

John McCarthy is a patron of Freedom from Torture

James Marriott Notebook

Sorry, Mum, my report card still says: needs work

Back up in Newcastle for the weekend my mum presents me with a bulging grey ringbinder. It is full of school reports gathered over my teenage years. A dossier of maternal pride. She remembered her son (as mums tend to) as an angelic straight-A student. To her consternation the first thing that fluttered out of the folder when she opened it was a detention slip. "Would James Marriott please report to Mr Clarke after school." There were some encouraging comments (my dad, who taught me English, tended to take a positive view of my character). But the tone of the reports was far from universally adulatory: disorganised, distracted, unbiddable. "Needs to rein in his tendency to write flamboyantly," comments one teacher.

The disturbing thing is how aptly these adjectives still apply to me. Though I am not as chaotic as I was at 17, when I bungled around school turning up at the wrong lessons with bits of paper flying out of my pockets, I still have a hard time remembering what I am supposed to be doing or focusing on any task that doesn't interest me. A decade and a half later I fear my report card would read: still no improvement.

I increasingly believe that as we age we change less than we might hope or believe. Thinking about my schoolfriends, I can't bring to mind anyone I knew at 15 whose adult life has turned out to be anything like an unforeseeable shock. Indeed, my sense is that after your early twenties — when you have the energy and self-doubt to try to be someone other than you are — most people lapse back into something more like their teenage habits and interests. This doesn't bode well for me.

Gull power

My poor mum. Not only is she coming to terms with this disillusioning revelation about her son's character, she is also being held hostage by a seagull. The problem started when she began feeding Nelson (as the seagull has been christened) sachets of cat food. He now patrols the garden waiting for his next dinner. When he becomes impatient around dinnertime (and he has little sense of moderation in gastronomic matters) he waddles up the patio and taps his beak incessantly on the French windows. The effect is intimidating. The only way to stop him doing this is to draw the curtains. We ate dinner in the dark.

Chilled northerners

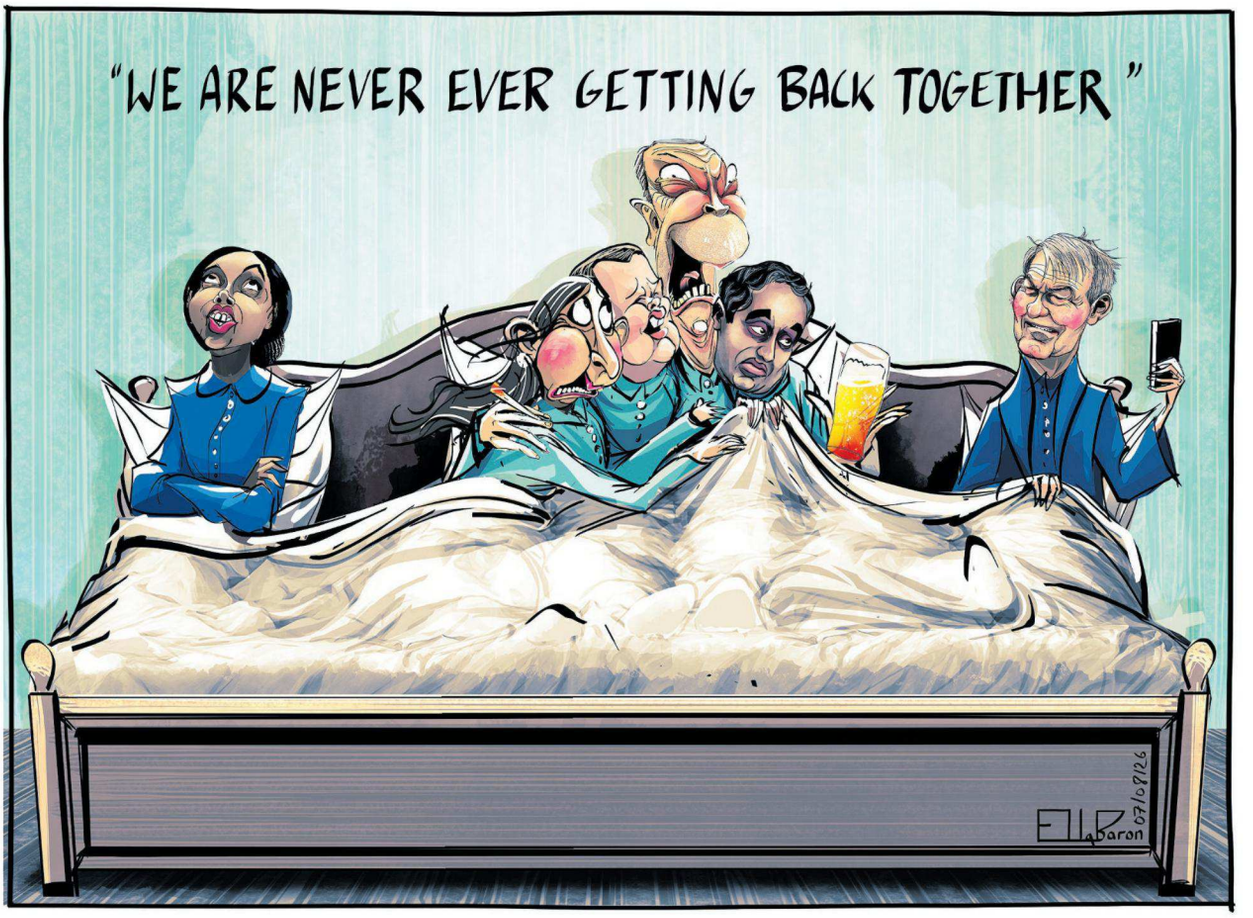
After weeks of punishing London heat it is blissfully cool in Newcastle. I vowed in my teens that I would never move back up north but gazing at the lowering clouds and gun-metal seas I wonder if I was over-hasty. Temperatures are so much more civilised in the northeast. How many Londoners, broiling alive in tiny oven-like flats, are beginning to think of a chiller life in Newcastle or Edinburgh or Leeds?

When Andy Burnham is thinking about how to revive the north, I wonder if he might factor in global warming. All those well-remunerated London bankers, management consultants and lawyers retreating to a more bearable climate. I don't think this is wholly fanciful.

English original

I am reading what must be one of the most eccentric classic novels of the 20th century, *Wolf Solent* by John Cowper Powys. I first read this book in my early twenties and had an abiding memory of weirdness. I was right. The sensibility of the author is unlike anything else I have encountered. How to describe it? His world is erotic, gothic and grotesque, full of incestuous booksellers, depraved country squires and innocent maidens. And (the best feature of his writing) he has a visionary and mystical sense of the Dorset countryside. This is mixed with an almost twee appreciation of the cosy comforts of English life. Slightly against my better judgment, I find myself swept up by all this.

It also means Powys regularly produces unexpected sentences like this one: "It was the memory of [the old bookseller's] obsessed expression — that expression of concentrated erotic insanity, directed towards universal matter, as he had caught it from under the man's wrinkled forehead across the blue tea-cosy." In the age of AI we hear a lot about the importance of "originality" in human intelligence. JCP passes with flying colours. You could run a large language model for centuries before it produced a phrase like that.



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Dr Fauci is the fall guy for a nation's ills

A vicious political reckoning over Covid has the self-regarding virologist in its crosshairs — and left all sides furious

Justin Webb

@JUSTINONWEB

Two pandemics, two journals. From Samuel Pepys during the great plague in London in 1665: "This day, much against my Will, I did in Drury-lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us' writ there."

And this from Dr Anthony Fauci, director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases as Covid was taking a hold in 2020: "Multiple editorials (print news Washington Post, etc.) and opinion pieces (Newsweek) written about me. Cannot keep up or even read all of them. Country needs someone to look up to in the face of Trump presidency. Interesting psychodynamics."

The contrast between the empathy and sobriety of Pepys and the frequent giddy self-indulgence of Fauci was noted by the veteran Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan last week. "The sweep and detail of Pepys's diary captures the spirit of his age, the Restoration," she wrote. "Let's hope the flatness and self-adulation of Anthony Fauci's doesn't capture ours."

The flatness and self-adulation are certainly present in the journal of Dr Fauci, which he seems rather foolishly to have saved on a government server, only to see it publicised by his enemies on the eve of his appearance before Congress. But another aspect of the spirit of the modern age was captured by last week's congressional hearing and the threat by the Senate's homeland security and governmental affairs committee to recommend he is prosecuted for contempt.

It's the hatred. Total hatred. Peggy Noonan's cool appraisal of Dr Fauci's reappearance on the national stage is

> Flatness and self-adulation are certainly present in his journal

unusual, even unique. In every other corner of the mainstream media, in every corner of the social media, in every corner of the whole nation, everyone has a view about Fauci and everyone is angry.

The indecorous mood was led from the Senate committee room itself: the Republican senator from Ohio, Bernie Moreno, asked, "Who the f*** do you think you were?", and, "It is a total disgrace what you did to this country."

That was in response to Fauci pleading the Fifth Amendment, the constitutional get-out that allows people not to incriminate themselves if they face possible prosecution. This despite Fauci already having a pardon for all crimes he might have committed, issued by President Biden as one of his last acts. And also despite some of the questions not being difficult, such as: "What colour is the carpet in front of you?" The senators now argue that Fauci needed to answer the committee because he was protected by his pardon, so the Fifth does not apply.

That is not the view of the doctor or his advisers. In his opening statement before, on the advice of counsel, he clammed up, Fauci addressed the behaviour of the committee chair Rand Paul directly: "The only conclusion I can reach is that the sole reason he is calling me before this committee is to get me to say something — anything — that could vindicate his repeated public pledges that I end up, in his words, quote, behind bars."

Fauci is 85. He has a long history of service to American health. His supporters — roughly half the nation — see this as McCarthyism reborn; a show trial that illustrates the demonic madness of the modern American right. His opponents — roughly the other half of the nation — believe Fauci suppressed discussion of the causes of Covid in order to protect scientists who were doing dirty deals with Chinese labs — or at the very least that he was responsible for encouraging the lockdowns and vaccine mandates that were in their view unnecessary and harmful.

It is as if all the pent-up fury from Covid is landing on his shoulders. Was it right that people lost their jobs because they would not have

> There would always be an explosion and Fauci is feeling its full force

the vaccine? Was it right that schools in some states stayed closed for much longer than seemed fully justified?

The Covid pandemic ripped America apart every bit as much as the financial crisis of 2008, and with all the more force because it opened fault lines that the crash had previously exposed. It pitted the rich, the privileged, the lanyard-wearing classes with their Ivy League haughtiness, against the poor folk who had to cover their faces, take their medicine and try as best they could to look after their kids at home. There was always going to be an explosion and Fauci is now feeling its full force.

The Senate committee split along party lines on Thursday as it voted to hold Fauci in contempt of Congress, the Republican majority getting its way. The next stop is President Trump's justice department, which will consider whether to charge him. There are plenty of lawyers who think the eventual success of such a prosecution is highly questionable but it is a simple fact that people convicted of contempt go to prison. Just ask the president's former right-hand man Steve Bannon. Jail or not, the Senate hearing was one of the most unpleasant and vicious sights Congress has seen in recent years.

You could, were you an optimist, point out that back in 1856, in a row about slavery, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts referred to another member as a "noise-some, squat, and nameless animal... not a proper model for an American senator". At the close of business an ally of the criticised gentleman beat Senator Sumner to within an inch of his life with a metal cane. So there has been actual violence in the Senate and the nation survived.

If you're a pessimist, you might point out that, before that longer term survival there was a civil war.

Justin Webb presents the Americast podcast on BBC Sounds

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Single-sex spaces

Sir, Further to your report "Defiant councils pledge to ignore new rules on single-sex spaces" (Aug 6), I hope the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on female spaces will finally be applied. As a woman who often travels solo, I rely on female dorms, yet there is no transparency over what "female" means. It has become increasingly problematic. Women are not told what the criteria are, and even asking is fraught. Various hostel chains offered a jumble of definitions: self-identification, biology, passport markers, Equality Act references or even "consent from other travellers". Several gave different answers depending on who I asked. None had information on their websites.

When I raised this lack of transparency with regulators, both the Advertising Standards Authority and Competition and Markets Authority said it fell outside their remit. In brief, even asking about "female only" spaces has been met with obstruction and silence. Enforcing those spaces is likely to be a similar battle, one that will require women to be awkward, articulate, persistent and even litigious. I am sure we will be.

Eveline Powell
Hastings

Ending the drought

Sir, It is something of a surprise that the record-breaking dry spell has not revived talk of a pipeline connecting the well-supplied north with the rainless south. The received wisdom is that it is too difficult and too expensive to excavate through the uneven English terrain. However, most water companies maintain connections with their neighbours for cost-effective "topping up" at the extremities of their territory; water could be moved in this way or possibly via the canal system. A nationwide pipeline would capture the interest and support of the electorate, but it would require the support of successive governments, whatever their colour. A successful project completed on time and within budget, admittedly over many years, might serve to eradicate any memory of the debacle that is HS2.

John Newton
Wittersham, Kent

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Corrections and clarifications

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Resignation of plagiarism row professor

Sir, In his article "Arday affair is an own goal for Cambridge" (Aug 6), Roger Mosey tells us that, in 2013, Cambridge University's student body was "disproportionately white compared with modern Britain". This he judged to be "a problem", presumably because he assumed it was unjust. Thirteen years later, he reports with enthusiasm that 35 per cent of Cambridge's new UK undergraduates come from ethnic minorities, including 58 per cent of economics students and 66 per cent of medics. And yet the black and ethnic minority proportion of the total population is 18 per cent, according to government statistics. If the current disproportion is not also unjust, it must be because non-white Britons are generally far better educated than white ones. But if it is unjust, it can only be because non-white applicants have been unfairly preferred to better white ones.

Lord Biggar
House of Lords

Sir, Roger Mosey reflects in his excellent article on his experience when elected to Cambridge University's equality, diversity and inclusion committee. Most notable was his plea to his colleagues that focus should not only be on ethnic minorities but also those who are also known to be missing out in admissions: young white working-class children, especially boys. His attempt at highlighting this concern was apparently met with scorn and an instant, lazy labelling as "the language of Farage". His experience resonates perfectly with my own over many years, where even raising that issue was "taboo" and apparently seen as "hard-right political thinking".

Now is surely the time for both Jesus College and Cambridge University to highlight their most recent admissions statistics, not only of the intake from ethnic minorities but also the data for one of the largest groups of British disadvantaged young people: white working-class boys.

Professor Peter P Edwards FRS
Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos

Sir, It is no surprise that Professor Jason Arday was a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. Jesuans have become increasingly concerned about the direction our alma mater has taken in recent years. The Benin Bronze that used to grace the dining hall was sent to Nigeria; the college's China Centre came to be regarded by some as a mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party; and alumni were forced to take legal action to stop the removal of the Rustat Memorial from the college chapel. The present college leaders have made this ancient and glorious institution a byword for virtue-signalling wokery. Unless they are replaced, many of us will be changing our wills.

Francis Bown
London E3

Sir, You report (news, Aug 6) that Cambridge University is to investigate Professor Jason Arday's qualifications and honorary appointments. Having done this elementary duty before his appointment might have saved Cambridge a great deal of embarrassment and ridicule.

Professor Peter Lantos
London NW1

Sir, If the publication of Professor Jason Arday's memoir does go ahead it will present a dilemma for librarians at Cambridge University and elsewhere. Should it be catalogued as fiction or non-fiction?

David Stanley
London SW6

Citizens' gallery

Sir, Michael Daley calls the National Gallery's citizens' assembly "barking mad" ("Gallery citizens don't know their art from their elbow, say critics", Aug 4). A randomly selected, demographically representative group of 50 people, briefed thoroughly and given time to deliberate, does not sideline expertise. Rather, a citizens' assembly puts the knowledge of all relevant experts — including curators, and indeed art critics such as Mr Daley — in dialogue with the people the gallery exists to serve.

As your article notes, Birmingham Museums Trust has also convened a citizens' assembly to reboot its strategy. It has been a success. The trust's co-chief executive, Sara Wajid, says the £65,000 investment led directly to strong new ideas, higher visitor numbers and greater funder confidence. If £250,000 to widen who shapes our National Gallery strikes critics as extravagant, I would suggest pricing up what it costs not to ask the public at all — in dwindling relevance and dwindling visitors.

Lucy Reid
Chief strategy officer, DemocracyNext

Early release flaw

Sir, While the government U-turn on the category of prisoners to be released after serving half their sentence is welcome, excluding those in prison for the manslaughter of emergency personnel is not ("Killers but not rapists to be given early release", Aug 4; letters, Aug 5). I doubt excluding the number of prisoners serving a sentence for the manslaughter of an emergency worker is so great that it would greatly exacerbate the prison estate's capacity problems. The decision to exclude this small category was either a lack of imagination by the government or ministers' contempt towards police officers and other emergency workers who, to quote various ministers in the past, "Run towards danger when others run away from it". Further, twice (at least) during the 1990s some Home Office prisoners (ie those who should be held in prisons) were lodged in police cells. We, and other police forces, closed a number of police cell complexes for people we had detained and instead lodged Home Office prisoners who were deemed to be low risk or were on remand. I am surprised this option has not been investigated to assist with the capacity problems.

Bob Pattison
Chief superintendent (ret'd), Northumbria Police; Bedlington, Northumberland

Nonna-maxxing

Sir, Jack Burke is right that we should celebrate our grandmothers, just as Italians appreciate their nonnas ("Nonna-maxxing? Why aren't we celebrating British nans?", Times2, Aug 5). My grandmother, Marie, was born in 1900 and named after Marie Lloyd, a star of music hall. She was, by contrast, serious and sometimes scary. Although she was wealthy owing to her father's career in banking, she remained thrifty her whole life. For example, when the collar of a shirt wore thin she would remove it, reverse it and sew it back on using a treadle-driven Singer. She also showed me the knife she used to decapitate chickens, which were kept in the back garden. She did this because her sons and husband couldn't bring themselves to do it.

Graham Ashen
Horsham, W Sussex

OUR BEACHES, WOODS, LANES — ALL FILTHY

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 7, 1926

It is satisfactory that a fine should have been inflicted this week for the offence of strewing torn paper in Finsbury Park; but the problem of London in this respect is relatively small and simple. During last weekend the litter scattered about the English sea beaches and other resorts of the holiday-maker was a disgrace to a country that claims to be civilised. Shyer spots, woods and lanes and fields, were left in a condition equally disgusting to decent people who know and love the country. And in these places, which have neither the tide nor a set of official scavengers to clean it up, the offence will linger on.

For charity's sake let us try to believe that the people who commit this outrage on what they profess to enjoy are not by nature either dirty or malicious. Suddenly, by means of the motor-coach and the motor-car, they have been made free of the country; and they cannot perhaps be expected to know how to behave there. They would be very angry if a passing stranger struck a match on the varnish of their new motor-car or emptied a pail of foul water through their parlour window. They take a proper pride in their own belongings. It is only through the crass selfishness born of ignorance that they degrade with their litter what they share with others.

The evil is growing so fast that it must be struck at the root, and without delay. Little can be hoped from legislation. It would probably be impossible to punish the leavers of litter — except in such places as the London parks — because they are clearly so large a section of the population. The adults among them must be given up as hopeless. The real hope lies in the children. The education authorities spare no pains in inculcating personal cleanliness into their pupils: care for the cleanliness of the land they should be proud of is no less important. If the children in the elementary schools were taught this kind of cleanliness, it is just possible that they might teach a little of it to their parents by the practical method of cleaning up some of their litter. And if the parents are past learning, there might still be hope of a coming generation which would be ashamed to accept beauty and happiness and to leave filth and befoulment in return.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Young women's use of walking sticks

Sir, As a recently retired GP with 42 years of medical experience, I congratulate Kathleen Stock on her insight ("Why are young women using walking sticks?", comment, Aug 6). Clearly, the conditions she describes, such as fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome, are affected by a multitude of physical, psychological and social factors.

Something that stuck in my mind was the comment made by a Romanian GP trainee about 20 years ago, when we were discussing the aforementioned conditions. He said: "These conditions don't exist in Romania." In his opinion that was because sickness benefits were more or less non-existent, and the fact of having to work prevented the symptoms from snowballing. It is certainly fairly widely accepted that part of the problem with fibromyalgia is deconditioning, where inactivity creates a situation where activity is painful, leading to a vicious circle of decline. Maybe he had a point?

Graham Moyse
Broadstone, Dorset

Sir, I would hazard a guess that much of what Kathleen Stock describes in her article has to do with a feeling of missing out. A society that pays and demonstrates attention to some marginalised cohorts (often admirably) leaves others feeling they are missing out. Those that deem themselves to be missing out choose to develop their own disability, in this case young women with walking sticks. The sooner people realise they can aspire to and master their own destiny they will feel less inclined to self-diagnose ailments in the hope that they will be rewarded for having them.

Katharine Barton
Hampton, Middx

Sir, Perhaps Kathleen Stock should not be too quick to criticise young women with walking sticks. An estimated two million people are living with long Covid, a large proportion of whom are women, and which affects, among dozens of other symptoms, balance and energy levels. Good for them if they are trying to live something approaching a normal life, and treat their mobility aid as a fashion accessory rather than a purely functional item.

Catherine Hickman
London W8

Care home subsidy

Sir, Further to Ian Hepworth's letter (Aug 6), my mother has been expertly looked after in a care home for the past two years. She is entirely self-funding, having sold her house to pay for her care. It is her money, and I can think of few better ways of spending it than being safe, warm and well-fed in her old age (she is 95). To read that the money she has worked and saved so hard for is probably being used to subsidise those who do not pay for their care is heartbreaking.

Sharon Tanton
Fordwich, Kent

Star attraction

Sir, Further to the subject of reissuing Star Wars in Welsh (news, Aug 5), the sequel to *The Empire Strikes Bach* (letter, Aug 6) could be *Return of the Jed-Dai.*

Gary Rumfitt
Durham

Daily Universal Register

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo begins, until August 29; the Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe open.

Nature notes

The world's largest tern species is enjoying a Yorkshire holiday. With its huge red bill, shaggy black crest and wingspan of more than four feet, the Caspian tern is causing quite a stir at the Nosterfield Nature Reserve. Hovering high over the water, the fish eater waits until it spots a fin or a flash of scale and then plunges. A stunningly graceful dive ends in an almighty splash. As its name suggests, the Caspian tern was a long way from home: these birds do indeed nest on the Caspian Sea. Actually they have a wide distribution. With an estimated global population of between only 240,000 and 470,000 individuals, the species can be found on every continent except Antarctica. Very few nomadic individuals visit the UK, usually in summer. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today

Dominic Cork, *pictured*, cricketer, England (1995-2002), 55; **Roger Boyes**, diplomatic editor and columnist, The Times, 74; **Greg Chappell**, cricketer, captain of Australia (1975-77, 1979-84), 78; **Brian Conley**, entertainer, host, *The Brian Conley Show* (1992-95, 2000-02), actor, *EastEnders* (2021-25), 65; **Bruce Dickinson**, singer, Iron Maiden, *Piece of Mind* (1983), and airline pilot, 68; **David Duchovny**, actor, *The X-Files* (1993-2002, 2015-16, 2018), 66; **Giorgetto Giugiaro**, designer, Volkswagen Golf Mk1 and DMC DeLorean, 88; **Sigfried Held**, footballer, West Germany (1966-73), 84; **Lauren Hemp**, footballer, Manchester City WFC and England, 26; **Harry Hyman**, founder and chairman of Primary Health Properties, founder of the International Opera Awards, 70; **Garrison Keillor**, writer, *Lake Wobegon Days* (1985), and broadcaster, 84; **Sir Andrew Large**, deputy governor, Bank of England (2002-06), 84; **Zane Lowe**, radio and TV presenter, 53; **Dame Sarah MacIntosh**, UK ambassador and permanent Representative, UK Mission to the UN, New York, 57; **Seema Malhotra**, Labour (Co-op) MP for Feltham & Heston, 54; **Matthew Parris**, Times columnist, broadcaster and Conservative MP (1979-86), 77; **Dame Anne Richards**, chairwoman, Coutts and Evelyn Partners (private bank and wealth management), 62; **Alain Robert**, free solo climber known as "the French Spider-Man", 64; **Nick Ross**, presenter, *Crimewatch* (1984-2007), 79; **Alexei Sayle**, comedian, *The Young Ones* (1982-84), 74; **Michael Shannon**, actor, *Nuremberg* (2025), 52; **Sir Michael Smurfit**, chairman, Smurfit Kappa Group (2005-07), 90; **Sir Richard Sykes**, microbiologist, chairman, Royal Institution (2010-22), 84; **Charlize Theron**, actress, *The Odyssey* (2026), 51; **Jimmy Wales**, co-founder (2001) of Wikipedia, 60; **Adam and Simon Yates**, road and track racing cyclists, 34.

On this day

In **1947** Kon-Tiki, Thor Heyerdahl's raft, landed in Polynesia, demonstrating the possibility of pre-Inca South American vessels having reached the islands.

The last word

"If there is anything that we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves." Carl Jung, Swiss psychologist, *Vom Werden der Persönlichkeit* (*The Development of Personality*) (1932)

TIMES PAST — THE TIMES — FUTURE

University Challenge

The case of Jason Arday, who resigned as a Cambridge professor after allegations of plagiarism and false assertions, has put a spotlight on academic vetting and rigour

There's an old joke that academic politics are so vicious because the stakes are so low. Yet while the quip might raise a wry smile in after-dinner speeches, it is not strictly true. And it is especially untrue in the case of Jason Arday, the Cambridge University sociology of education professor, who resigned on Wednesday after both the authenticity of his scholarship and the extravagance of his personal claims came under intensifying scrutiny.

Here, the stakes are very high indeed. When Mr Arday was appointed to the chair by Cambridge in 2023, the university publicised the move with great fanfare. He was, its website said, "a highly respected scholar of race, inequality and education" who was now the "youngest Black person ever appointed to a professorship at Cambridge". The announcement emphasised the numerous obstacles he overcame in order to reach the summit of academia, including economic disadvantage, racial prejudice and an autism diagnosis. In the modern era, fuelled by social media, a powerful personal story is often deployed by individuals and employers as a route to success — but it should never outrank the work itself.

When claims arose in July that Mr Arday had plagiarised portions of his PhD thesis, Cambridge at first described them as a "vile campaign to undermine his credibility". Further back, in February, Jack Grove, a reporter on Times Higher Education, had been warned by the Metropolitan Police to stop contacting Mr Arday. His inquiries — amounting to three polite emails and a letter — were said to be affecting the professor's mental health. Mr Grove had not only sought clarification over plagiarism allegations, prompted by tip-offs from other academics, but also over Mr Arday's striking assertions about charity activities. These included a claim to have run 600 miles in six days, a feat unverified elsewhere. Since then, far more has emerged that seems to lay bare the professor's hazy relationship with objective truth, including false claims of visiting professorships and authorship of a book that was in fact never published.

Both Cambridge University and Jesus College, to which Mr Arday was affiliated, have now promised investigations. But a troubling picture is already emerging. It is of a university which seemingly jettisoned rigour in vetting a candidate for one of its top posts while broadcasting a personal narrative which — even at the outset — had elements which bore further investigation. What was there in Mr Arday's verified body of work, for example, which genuinely supported the 2023 accolade from Prof Hilary Cremin, the head of Cambridge's Faculty of Education, that "you are the best in the world in terms of the research that you do"? Those academics with concerns apparently had nowhere to voice them without risk to their own careers, relying instead on briefings to a journalist who was himself subjected to investigation by the police. So much for the spirit of fearless inquiry that is meant to illuminate our universities.

The phenomenon in which objective truth is disregarded in favour of a compelling narrative is one which increasingly dogs the political landscape, on both left and right. It has previously caused scandals in the publishing industry, too, but in this instance the institutional implications are even more serious. This case has damaged the world-class reputation of Cambridge University. By promoting Mr Arday so swiftly and uncritically while trumpeting his race, it has also dented the reputation of sociology of education and made life harder for the many black academics with solid and admirable bodies of work. And as students leave university with an average debt of £50,000, it has raised worrying questions about the quality of the teaching to which they are exposed. Any investigation must not stop at establishing the facts about Mr Arday. It must also take a long, hard look at the people and processes that elevated him.

Courting Trouble

Public bodies cannot refuse to enforce the Supreme Court's ruling on biological sex

Samantha Niblett, the Labour MP for South Derbyshire, drew attention earlier this year with an educational campaign that enjoined the public to take part in a "summer of sex". Despite embracing her moniker as the so-called "sex MP", Ms Niblett shows a disconcertingly poor grasp of the biological underpinnings of her chosen subject. In a video posted to social media, recorded while sunning herself on a poolside lounger, the backbencher railed against guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) which is designed to protect women in single-sex spaces. That guidance, she said, only caused "more division and hatred": "all it does is dismiss the lived experience of trans people".

Ms Niblett's remarks show her in a remarkably poor light. The EHRC's code of practice, which finally came into force on Wednesday, provides public-facing organisations with practical advice about how to comply with the law. It was the Supreme Court that confirmed in April last year that the interpretation of UK equality law requires terms such as "man" and "woman" to be read with their ordinary biological meanings. That means that toilets, changing rooms, rape crisis centres and hospital wards reserved for women must not be open to men, whatever their gender identity. In seeking to discredit the EHRC's code, Ms Niblett is positioning herself at odds not merely with women's entitlements but with the law of the land as the UK's highest court interprets it.

Unfortunately, Ms Niblett is not alone in her grandstanding. Many of Labour's more left-leaning MPs have found it hard to digest the Supreme Court's decision. Dawn Butler, MP for Brent East, has tried to block the EHRC's code with an early day motion in parliament, and Nadia Whittome, MP for Nottingham East, has backed a judicial review, led by the ill-named Good Law Project, which aims to frustrate the law's implementation. Bridget Phillipson, the minister charged with ensuring the EHRC's guidance is enforced, herself vacillated for far too long in presenting it to parliament. That women are entitled to female-only spaces should be a settled issue now that the law has been clarified. Labour's MPs need to catch up.

Unfortunately, resistance to the EHRC's guidance extends far beyond parliament. Yesterday, this paper reported that several left-wing councils are engaged in co-ordinated attempts to resist implementing equality law. In a joint letter, representatives of six London boroughs branded the EHRC's code "harmful" and said their staff would not be made to enforce it. Bristol city council, too, has said that its women's services will continue to operate on the illegal basis that trans-identified males may access them. Scandalously, NHS England has yet to update its internal policies on single-sex services or to say when it will do so. The National Union of Students has gone further in producing literature advising members about how to "resist" the law.

The government must call out this destructive grandstanding. Sadly, as Baroness Falkner, the commission's former chair, has recently emphasised, the EHRC's meagre funds mean that it cannot ensure its own guidance is properly followed. That responsibility tends to fall to grassroots organisations of ordinary women, who band together at their own expense to challenge rogue public bodies and councils. These campaigners may have hoped the struggle to enjoy their rights was over; they should not have to wait any longer.

Pleasures of Drinking

Restricting alcohol sales to customers who are seated would be foolish puritanism

"The plain fact," wrote Christopher Hitchens years ago, "is that it makes other people, and indeed life itself, a good deal less boring." He was referring to the pleasures of social drinking, in which he was an expert practitioner. These pleasures sadly appear unknown to Westminster council, whose draft licensing policy proposes "the introduction of measures to reduce the extent of, or remove opportunities for, vertical drinking".

By this curious neologism, the council means drinking while standing up. In keeping with the puritan ethos through the ages, this draft policy supposedly serves the public good, by discouraging drunkenness. In practice, it is an unnecessary edict. It would stymie innocent enjoyment that harms no one, damage business, and make central London a less appealing place for visitors.

The council's jurisdiction includes the West End. The area is a magnet for tourism, famed for culture and cuisine. It was not always thus. A generation ago, Soho — a stone's throw from the National Gallery and English National Opera — was a byword for squalor, sex shops and prostitution. The area is transformed. Its narrow streets now house outstanding restaurants and welcoming bars. The notion that it would be further enhanced by preventing customers from freely mixing has, to put it politely, no evidential support.

No one doubts the leisure sector must operate within a framework of rules. If adopted sensitively, regulation can make a night out a more pleasurable experience for everyone. Less than 20 years ago, smoking was permitted in bars and restaurants in England and Wales; few lament its demise.

Shepherding social drinkers to table service is not that type of approach. By design, it would segregate parties rather than integrate them. It is a penalty for pleasure, conceived as a bureaucratic *idée fixe*. This is emphatically not the British way.

World

Ukrainian soldier lured to death

Mykyta Orlykivskyi's online romance ended with a 'gift' of poisoned whisky, writes **Jack Clover** in Zhytomyr

The young soldier was found slumped on the balcony of his flat with a faint pulse. A bottle of liquor and a Swiss army knife lay on his table. In hospital the doctors said he had tried to take his own life. With his final ounce of strength he tried tell them they were wrong.

"I went up to [his bed] and asked him, 'Why did you do this to yourself?'" his aunt recalled in tears.

"He heard me. He could not speak. But he shook his head. It was like he wanted to tell me something."

At the behest of Russian spies, a woman who the soldier called his beloved had lured him to his death.

It was in April that Mykyta Orlykivskyi first told his family he had met someone. His aunt Tetiana Apalko, 53, told his story on a park bench in Zhytomyr, a city hundreds of miles from the front line, clutching photos of her dead nephew.

A woman had reached out to him directly through the Telegram messaging app. She said that she had seen a Mykyta from Zhytomyr on a dating app and liked what she saw, asking if he was the same man. Orlykivskyi, 23, was not on any dating apps but he was flattered and continued the conversation.

The pair exchanged messages and photos. She told him that they were "so similar" and that she had taken a fancy to him. When asked whether he was a soldier, Orlykivskyi uploaded a photo of himself in uniform, wearing a patch bearing the New Zealand flag on his shoulder. It was taken when he was undergoing military training in the UK at the start of 2024, like thousands of Ukrainian soldiers before him. "For the Russian security services it was proof that he was really a soldier," Apalko said. "They didn't need anything else."

The woman, who was saved on Orlykivskyi's phone only as "Rodnaya", meaning "dear one" or "darling" in Russian, responded with AI-edited images in which she appears in the same British forest to embrace him.

The woman had built a compelling backstory. She was 30 years old and lived in Kharkiv. Her flat had been shelled and she had been in and out of hospital. Her brother was even fighting for Ukraine. "When he first told us about her I said, 'Look if she's a nice girl then why not talk to her?" Apalko recalled.

"I [even] said, 'If the shelling's that bad why doesn't she come and live with us for a bit'." The woman claimed that she could not leave Kharkiv while she sorted out paperwork connected to the bombing of her flat. Meanwhile, Apalko watched her nephew fall in love. The pair chatted for two months, over messages and video calls, and they would talk at length about how much they both loved animals and cooking. "I even noticed a change in him for the better," Apalko recalled. "She [seemed] to be a good influence on him."

Apalko witnessed some of their video calls. At the time nothing seemed to be suspicious. The dark-haired woman was certainly real, she spoke Russian not Ukrainian, but that is common in Kharkiv. Yet, behind her, the backdrop was always the same white wall.

By the end of May, they had arranged a meeting. "I will soon come to you," the woman wrote.

Yet on the designated date she said she had to delay her travel due to a problem with her documents. For now, she would send a present instead.

At 10am on Wednesday, June 3, Apalko received a phone call out of the blue. A woman purportedly from "law enforcement" — most probably the Ukrainian intelligence services — asked whether she had seen her nephew recently as she feared he may already be dead.

By 1pm Apalko, with help from friends, had broken the door down to her nephew's flat. "We rushed in. He was sitting on the balcony, already unconscious, and I started screaming," she said. He was given CPR and taken to hospital. Doctors told her he had ingested poison. "I didn't understand. I thought perhaps he had poisoned himself," Apalko said. "Then I thought perhaps it was a drug overdose ... but he didn't do drugs at all."

That evening a woman who called herself "Mykyta's girl from Kharkiv" rang Apalko. Her voice seemed coarser than the woman she had heard on video calls with her nephew, and she did not give a name. She claimed she was concerned about Orlykivskyi's welfare as he had not replied to her messages. She pretended to be shocked to hear of his condition and rang again the next day.

On Friday a report on local television about a separate case seemed to shed some light on what could have happened to Orlykivskyi. A 17-year-old girl from the nearby town of Berdychiv had been detained on suspicion of poisoning a 27-year-old Ukrainian soldier at the behest of the Russian security services. She had been recruited after searching for "quick money" jobs on Telegram, the Ukrainian authorities said.

Her handler had tested her as a drug courier to start with, then asked her to get close to a Ukrainian soldier. She found one online and they ended up renting a flat in the centre of Zhytomyr. "He left her to go to the shop to buy some liquor," Oleh Lakyziuk, a senior investigator from the city's police told The Times. "She called [her handler] on Telegram and explained the situation. The soldier came back with two bottles of cognac." They raised their glasses and drank together. "But in one she had already added methadone," Lakyziuk said. The soldier died.

Having seen the news, Apalko's daughter called her. "She said, 'Mum, it can't be suicide ... something's not right. Go to the police'."

On Saturday detectives searched Orlykivskyi's flat and discovered the string of messages on his laptop. They showed that his "darling" had called him over video at around the time he is thought to have drunk the poison, his aunt said. The woman left the call before he became ill but he soon texted a friend with a photo of the whisky and a message: "What is this stuff? I have only had three shots and ... I'm dead."

The detective told Apalko that the case had hallmarks of the Russian FSB. His laptop, phone, the bottle of whisky, a suspicious knife and a gift bag were taken as evidence. "I was in shock," she said. Her phone rang again, "Mykyta's girl" checking in. This time, the detective told her not to pick up. She was calling for confirmation for her handlers that the job was complete, he said.

Orlykivskyi died at around 6am on Tuesday, June 9.

Mykyta's "darling" did not send him the poisoned whisky herself, detectives surmised. Instead, a 19-year-old man from Poltava, in central Ukraine, had been recruited on Telegram to inject poison into the bottle and post the package to Orlykivskyi's flat in return for 5,000 hryvnia — about £80. "A

Mykyta Orlykivskyi in an AI-edited image with the woman he met online who was part of a plot to murder him; above, Orlykivskyi in uniform and below, photos of the poisoned Ukrainian soldier. Below left, Tetiana Apalko, who still has unanswered questions about her nephew's death

Kremlin disinformation 'smearing French election candidates'

France

Charles Bremner Paris

France has accused Russia of staging disinformation smear campaigns against two contenders for next spring's presidential election.

Security officials said cyberwarfare units of the GRU military intelligence agency were behind false news reports intended to discredit Édouard Philippe, a former centre-right prime minister, and Raphaël Glucksmann, leader of the Place Publique Party, which is aligned with the centre-left Socialists.

Philippe, 55, was targeted in a coordinated social media campaign by French-language accounts falsely claiming that he was suffering from a brain disease. In a more elaborate operation, a counterfeit version of a French news site, a deepfake video and a battery of French social media accounts emerged over the past week to push a claim that the partner of Glucksmann, 46, was offering bribes to left-wing media outlets to support him.

Philippe, the mayor of Le Havre, is polling second behind Marine Le Pen, leader of the hard-right National Rally. He is so far the only candidate who could beat her, according to some early polls. The election will be held in April.

Glucksmann, the preferred candidate of moderate left-wing voters, is in third place in presidential voting intentions, although he is only expected to formally declare his candidacy this month. President Macron and Sébastien Lecornu, the prime minister, have warned that Russia's intelligence services, led by the GRU, are stepping up a hybrid warfare campaign that they have been waging in France since 2017 with the aim of influencing elections and destabilising the country.

Gabriel Attal, 37, a former prime minister who is vying for the centre-right mantle in the election, has been subject to "foreign interference operations originating from Russia and from bodies linked to the Russian central government," his team said it was told. No further details were given but the security service said the attack was relatively low impact.

Ministers last week ordered the deportation of Xenia Fedorova, a Russian propagandist who has become a star commentator on the right-wing news outlets owned by Vincent Bolloré, a billionaire industrialist turned media tycoon. The government said she was not a journalist but an "agent of influence working for the Kremlin".

The false reporting on Glucksmann on the counterfeit version of the Blast news site included a fake email supposedly from Léa Salamé, Glucksmann's partner, who is the main news presenter on France 2 television. The email offered €50,000 to Edwy Plenel, editor of the Mediapart investigative website.

France has become unusually explicit in identifying the Russian agencies it said were trying to destabilise the country by fuelling divisions, both through disinformation and physical operations. "The Russian manipulation threat to the presidential campaign will be major," Lecornu said in June.

Caught up: Léa Salamé and Raphaël Glucksmann

Met museum honour for designer who 'loved Hitler'
Page 31

Trump 'berates Hegseth' for missile crisis
Page 32

in Russian 'honeytrap'

human life for 5,000 hryvnia," Apalko said. "If only he just called me. I'd have given him 10,000 [on the spot]."

The woman is thought to have contacted Orlykivskyi not from Kharkiv, but from the Russian-occupied Donetsk region. Apalko was told by investigators that she was thought to have been a prison inmate, which would explain the wall backdrop. Police could not confirm this and said the investigation was ongoing.

When The Times called the phone number of Mykyta's "darling", the line was dead. Mysteries remain. Why did Orlykivskyi, three days before he was poisoned, post a photo on his Instagram story showing a bottle of whisky, a knife stuck upright in a table, his open laptop screen and an AI-generated song called *I am the Imperatrix* playing in the background? Why did, according to Apalko, a man arrive at his flat moments before she came to break down the door asking neighbours whether a "drug addict" lived there? Why is the FSB recruiting in women's prisons and what do the women get in return?

Ukraine has thwarted 50 attempts to kill its soldiers through fake dates this year, according to the SBU security service. The number of successful assassination attempts is unknown.

"The SBU has recorded a significant increase in the Russian special services' attempts to eliminate Ukrainian servicemen using the so-called 'honeytrap' method," the service announced this week.

Improvised explosives are the most popular method of choice. In January, a woman invited a soldier on a date in an industrial area of Zaporizhzhia. But a man in a balaclava jumped out and stabbed him six times before the SBU arrived on the scene. In other cases poisoning is common.

Two teenage girls are accused of poisoning a soldier with methadone in January, then filming his death for their FSB handler. In April, in Uzhhorod, western Ukraine, a 26-year-old woman from Zaporizhzhia was accused of stealing information from a soldier's phone, poisoning him and making the death appear to be of natural causes, in exchange for $3,000 from Russian spies.

There have also been cases of civilian Ukrainian women or intelligence operatives seeking to "catfish" Russian soldiers on dating apps such as Tinder to give away their positions or lure them into drone fire.

Orlykivskyi's mother died when he was 14, and his father died a few years later. He lived with Apalko and her husband for a while, then moved to live with his grandmother in Odesa. He volunteered to fight after finishing college. Apalko tried to convince the recruitment officers not to take him. "He has no parents. He is still a child," she said. The officers replied that he was an adult and had made his choice.

He was killed while on leave, trying to organise documents to exit the army and become a carer for his grandmother, who was by then unwell.

"His whole life was ahead of him. He always wanted to have children," she said. "It's just so cynical. How is it possible that she could confess her love to him ... while all the time knowing that she was going to murder him?"

Leipzig drone 'targeted plane carrying ammunition'

Germany
Tom Parfitt

A Ukrainian plane that was the suspected target of a kamikaze drone at Leipzig airport was carrying a cargo of military ammunition, it emerged yesterday, heightening concerns that Moscow was behind the incident.

News outlets including Süddeutsche Zeitung revealed the nature of the plane's load, adding to Germany's assertion that the incident on Wednesday represented a "new level of threat".

Saxony police said earlier that a robot was deployed at Leipzig-Halle airport after an employee discovered a quadcopter drone overnight on the ground in a restricted area near Ukrainian Antonov cargo planes. Flights were halted and the detonator was removed from an explosive device attached to the drone. Police later carried out a controlled explosion.

Peter Neumann, professor of security studies at King's College London, described it as an escalation. "We've known about suspicious drone flights over Germany for years," he said. "However, a drone equipped with an explosive device and detonator represents a new level of severity."

While scores of suspected Russian drone incursions have been reported across Europe since President Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, most were connected to surveillance and general disruption rather than an apparent attempt to strike a military target.

In a separate but possibly linked incident on Wednesday, a DHL cargo plane hit an object as it diverted from Leipzig airport as a result of the drone discovery. Police were searching for debris from that collision yesterday. The plane was lightly damaged and landed safely at another airport.

Leipzig airport's freight terminal is one of the largest in Europe and it plays a significant role in supplying Ukraine. Nato's Strategic Airlift International Solution (Salis) programme uses Antonov aircraft based there to transport weapons and other heavy equipment.

Charlie Edwards, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a security think tank, said it was "highly likely the site was chosen for what it does", and the fact the drone was armed marked a departure from spying or disruption activities by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

"A UAV carrying a charge with a detonator that failed is a different proposition, and it is likely, though not yet certain, that this was intended to function rather than to be found," he said.

"Almost always affected are the Bundeswehr [armed forces], the arms industry, and logistical hubs — in other words, precisely the infrastructure that is central to supporting Ukraine," Neumann said, adding that the drones were hard to detect. "Autonomous flying systems cannot simply be jammed."

Colombia prepares for right-wing president

Stephen Gibbs
Latin America Correspondent

Leaders of the Latin American right will gather in Cali, Colombia's third largest city, today for the presidential inauguration of the ultra-conservative Abelardo de la Espriella.

More than 11,000 security personnel have been deployed across the city to prevent violence. On Wednesday, the authorities intercepted a bus laden with 450kg of explosives heading towards Cali on the pan-American highway. Colombian officials believe it was part of a planned attack by a local guerrilla group on military and police facilities, timed to take place during the inauguration.

De la Espriella, a self-made multimillionaire lawyer, has promised to restore security to Colombia with a zero-tolerance attitude toward drug cartels. One of his election pledges was to capture or kill ten drug kingpins within 90 days of taking office. "I'll hunt them like rats," he said. Since Donald Trump returned to the White House in January 2025, the right has won all seven presidential elections held in Latin America and the guest list for today's ceremony mirrors this political shift. The presidents expected to attend include Javier Milei of Argentina, Daniel Noboa of Ecuador, Santiago Peña of Paraguay, José Antonio Kast of Chile, José Raúl Mulino of Panama, Luis Abinader of the Dominican Republic and Nasry Asfura of Honduras.

Abelardo de la Espriella has promised a zero-tolerance attitude to cartels

A US delegation representing President Trump will be led by the attorney-general, Todd Blanche. Also expected is the director of the US office of national drug control policy, Sara Carter.

The choice of Cali for the ceremony, rather than the capital, Bogota, is itself a statement. Cali and its environs form one the regions of Colombia most afflicted by organised crime.

One notable absentee from the inauguration will be the outgoing president, Gustavo Petro. He has claimed the election in which his preferred candidate lost was marred by fraud, without providing evidence. Under Petro, the country's first leftist president, cocaine production reached record highs.

De la Espriella, who has no previous political experience, has been a supporter of the US "Shield of the Americas" initiative, a political-military coordination framework launched by Trump in March. The US military began airstrikes against alleged drug-carrying boats in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific in September last year.

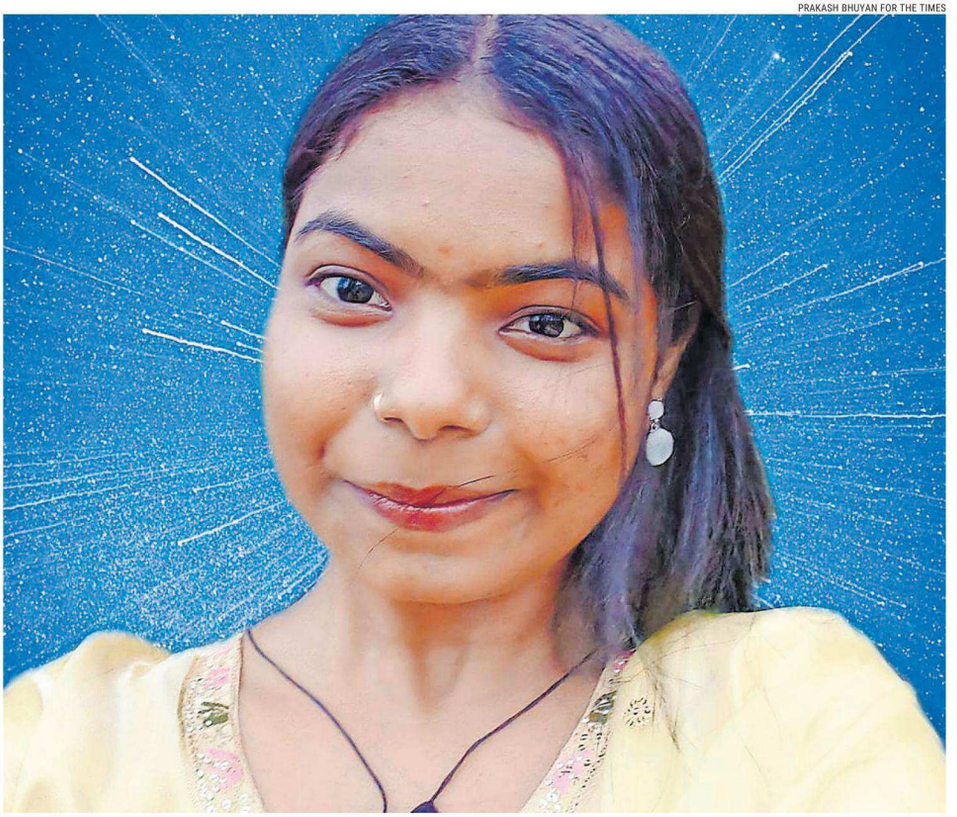
Replying to a congratulatory message after his election from Pete Hegseth, the US war secretary, De la Espriella said: "Colombia will no longer be governed by a government complacent toward narcoterrorism; we will combat it as it deserves."

World

Exam leak was final straw for our terrified and exhausted daughter

The scale of the crisis in India's school system is reflected in the suicide numbers, writes **Arjuna Keshvani-Ham**

PRAKASH BHUYAN FOR THE TIMES



Rema Begum had dreamt of becoming a doctor but was distraught after a leak caused the cancellation of her exams, her parents said. The cockroach protests were the result of the government's dismissive attitude to student suffering

At 7am on May 3, Rema Begum left her family home in Goalpara, a town in the Indian state of Assam, to sit her medical college entrance test.

Begum, 20, was terrified. She had worked 16-hour days for two years, living in a hostel nearly 124 miles from home in order to take private classes. Nothing scared her more than exams.

She had dreamt since childhood of becoming a doctor. Her mother, who worked in a nursery, had been chronically ill for years and Begum wanted to cure her.

One thing stood in her way: the notoriously difficult medical college entrance test covering physics, chemistry and biology. Known as the Neet, it is taken by more than two million students across India every year. Only 129,000 pass. To get a place at medical school, Begum would need to come in the top 5 per cent.

Begum came home to her father and mother with her head held high. The exam, she told them, had gone well. "I'll get a place somewhere," she reassured her father. But nine days later, a notice from the National Testing Agency (NTA) appeared on the news. The test paper, it said, had been leaked. All 2.3 million students would need to resit the exam.

Begum was in the kitchen with her father, Rajaul Islam, 43, when she heard. "Her face fell," Islam said. "She didn't think she'd be able to pass it a second time round." Three days later, Begum's mother, Romina Khatum, 39, returned home from work to find that her daughter had taken her own life.

She was one of 21 students reported to have killed themselves after the leak.

Last month 50,000 protesters from the "cockroach movement" swamped the Jantar Mantar site in Delhi to demand the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan, the education minister, over the exam leak and rising number of student suicides.

The protests were led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a youth movement founded by Abhijeet Dipke, 30, a Boston University graduate, after India's chief justice compared some of the nation's unemployed youth to "cockroaches".

The peaceful protest turned violent on July 20 after police in Delhi fired tear gas and beat protesters with sticks known as lathis. On July 25, after talks with CJP members, Pradhan was forced to resign.

The protests were called off after the CJP's demands were met, but it has since threatened to resume them after reports that students, who had been promised amnesty, were being detained or harassed by police.

Begum's father, Islam, a fish trader, wept as he said: "I never put any pressure on her. I tried to explain to her that the exam leak had happened to all the students. But it was really traumatic for her the first time round. She didn't want to study for it again."

Islam had spent up to 10 lakh (£7,800) on exam coaching for his daughter — all the money he had. "I told her to resit the exam. I told her it didn't matter if she got selected or not. But she kept saying, 'What will people think of me if I don't get selected?'

"The kids work so hard and they have such innocent and admirable dreams. They work for them day and night. They live far away from their parents. But when the system fails them, it breaks their trust and makes them feel like their dreams will never come true. It breaks their body and spirit."

The day after news of the exam leak surfaced, another student, Ritik Mishra, 21, asked his mother to make him parathas and vegetables before going out. When he did not return, his family went looking for him; they found his body in a second house the family owned down the road.

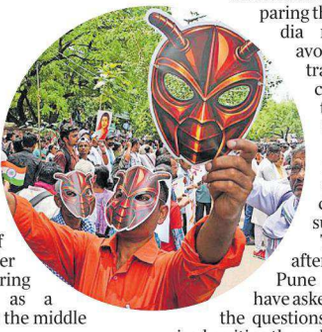
"If we'd known what he was going through, we never would have let him leave," his father, Anup Mishra, said; he is still paying interest on the loan he took out for his son's exam coaching. "The system and the government killed my son," he said.

India's college entrance exam system is one of the most competitive in the world. Students compete for a tiny number of places at top-tier medical or engineering institutions, seen as a golden ticket to join the middle classes.

Standard schooling is considered insufficient to pass these tests and so hundreds of thousands of students move to "coaching cities", such as Kota in Rajasthan, which have turned into exam preparation hubs — and lucrative businesses. Many live away from their parents for years, studying for up to 18 hours a day. At Kota, children can be enrolled at 11, though most will not sit entrance exams until they are 17. The pressure is compounded by their parents' financial sacrifices and the weight of social expectation.

Thousands take their own lives every year due to the stress of studying or failure to get good enough results. In 2024, India recorded 14,488 student suicides, 8.5 per cent of all deaths by suicide. The Supreme Court said this was a "disturbing pattern" and warned against treating the deaths as isolated incidents.

The crisis of exam leaks is rooted in systemic corruption. Police investigations indicated that the Neet leak originated with some internal NTA panel members and subject experts directly involved in translating and preparing the paper. Local media reported that to avoid leaving a digital trail, tutors with access to exam questions had dictated them to a small group of students in private coaching sessions in exchange for large sums of money.



The leak spread after a beautician in Pune was reported to have asked students to recall the questions they had memorised, writing them down to reconstruct the exam paper. She then sold copies, local media said.

Narendra Modi, the prime minister, has promised reform. On July 26 he announced on social media that Nandan Nilekani, the co-founder of Infosys, the IT consultancy, would lead a "high-powered task force" on exam reform.

On July 29, the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, introduced harsher punishments for exam leakers.

Reform is vital but will not be easy

Analysis

In a country of extreme inequality, corruption and nepotism, the Neet exam is one instance in which people are supposedly judged on merit alone, not on who their family knows or who can be bribed (Amrit Dhillon writes).

Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation as education minister over the latest leak of the exam paper was merely symbolic. The real issue is how to change the system. The government has appointed a panel of experts to find ways of using technology to prevent exam leaks. This alone will be a herculean task.

From the academics who set the questions to the people who translate it into 13 Indian languages, pack it into ostensibly sealed trunks, load it onto trucks and distribute it all over India, the opportunities for corruption and leaks are numerous. Criminal gangs make money from selling the questions either to parents or to coaching centres.

Tackling the deeper, structural problems will be even more difficult. Economic growth under Narendra Modi has been impressive and steady but largely jobless. After spending several years and precious family savings pursuing higher education, surveys show that about 60 per cent of the unemployed in India are graduates.

With too few private sector jobs the Indian middle class obsession with careers in medicine, engineering and law as the only path to security and status has become pronounced. For entry to engineering colleges, about 1.5 million students appear every year for the JEE entrance exam, competing for about 67,000 places. More than two million sit the Neet each year.

The government has built more medical colleges, tripling the number to 844 since 2014. Yet the competition for heavily subsidised government colleges is brutal because their fees are much lower than private counterparts. Total tuition fees at a government medical college can run to £7,800, compared with £118,000 at private colleges.

Education experts agree India must decentralise the exam, with colleges setting individual entrance tests, and move towards continuous assessment. The medical and engineering entrance exams are multiple choice, largely a test of memory.

The result is a vast pool of unemployable graduates who lack the problem-solving skills that the marketplace needs.

Forget bloated blockbusters, surprise cinema hit shows less is more

France
Charles Bremner Paris

While filmgoers are proving happy this summer to spend nearly three hours watching Odysseus get home, the French are flocking to a surprise seasonal hit that shows that sometimes less is more.

De la Comédie-Française, a spritely backstage farce set in the august French national theatre, has earned enthusiastic reviews and is expected to sell some two million tickets despite it running for only 75 minutes.

The gag-filled story of a disastrous opening night of *Macbeth* is being praised as an antidote to blockbuster bloat from Hollywood and also a trend of lengthening French releases.

Often criticised even by domestic critics as too slow and talky, French films have been creeping up from their recent average of about 100 minutes. France's summer blockbuster, *La Bataille de Gaulle*, a two-part epic about Charles de Gaulle, runs 160 minutes for each episode.

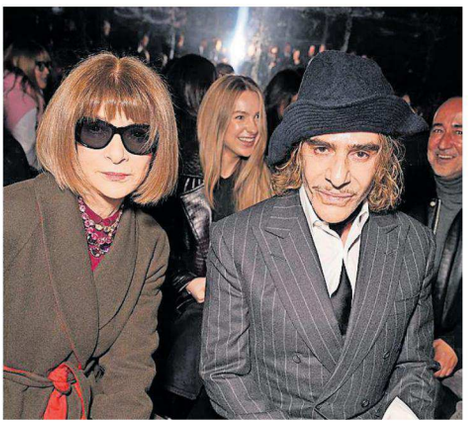
Martin Darondeau and Bertrand Usclat, directors of *De la Comédie-Française*, said they made a virtue of the conditions imposed on them when they were given an opportunity to shoot in the Salle Richelieu, home of the 345-year-old company by the Palais-Royal. "Right from the start, we knew we were going to make a short film," Darondeau told Le Parisien newspaper.

A low budget of about €2 million and the short shooting time helped produce a tight, fast-paced comedy more akin to a play. The film critic of France Info radio said: "The two directors wrapped up the scenario in two months and shot it in three weeks. The film is infused with that energy and sense of urgency."

AlloCiné, a leading film site, concurred: "The very short running time leaves virtually no room for lulls and keeps the story focused throughout."

While the brevity has been greeted as a plus by the critics, some fans have complained of being shortchanged by a thin screenplay.

However, the short length is being turned to commercial advantage as word of mouth and media praise are generating packed houses. Cinemas are squeezing in extra screenings, with some offering up to eight a day.



FRANCOIS GUILLOT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The British designer John Galliano with Anna Wintour at a Dior show in Paris in January, left. Galliano with Linda Evangelista and Naomi Campbell at a 2007 Parisian Dior show, right, before his public fall from grace

Met museum honour for designer who 'loved Hitler'

United States
Olivia Empson New York

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is a mecca for the fashion and art glitterati, with a show there being the highest accolade in a designer's career.

Next year it will host a retrospective focusing exclusively on the work of John Galliano, the third living designer to have a solo exhibition at the Met Costume Institute.

For some, the retrospective is a long-overdue celebration of Galliano's talent. Known for his theatrical, romantic, even whimsical garments, he bounced into the London fashion scene in the 1990s, disrupting traditional couture and consecutively winning British designer of the year.

For others, his show is an unforgivable platform for an artist whose career has been marred by scandal. Galliano's reputation collapsed in 2011 after he made racist and antisemitic comments that forced his exile from the fashion world.

Dana Thomas, the author of *Gods and Kings: The Rise and Fall of Alexander McQueen and John Galliano* also criticised the show in a recent opinion piece headlined "The Metropolitan Museum of Art is Making a Very Bad Mistake".

"Not all great creators deserve a retrospective," she wrote. "Someone as incendiary as Mr Galliano certainly shouldn't be the subject of one during his lifetime, when he stands to profit from the honour personally."

She added to The Times: "A museum retrospective is supposed to be an act of scholarship, not a collaboration with its subject. When the designer is helping shape the exhibition, overseeing the installation and standing there to celebrate the opening, it's difficult to argue that the museum is offering an objective assessment rather than participating in a rehabilitation."

The retrospective, which opens on May 9 next year promises not to neglect the controversies that have defined Galliano's career. Before its announcement, organisers met rabbis and Jewish leaders in New York.

"We had frank conversations about this challenging moment for the Jewish community with the spike in antisemitism which is the painful backdrop to this proposed exhibition," said Rabbi Rick Jacobs, who was involved in the discussions. "But I saw that he recognised his harm to the Jewish community and that the gala organisers were committed to addressing his past in a meaningful way."

For many critics, however, these consultations don't go far enough. The only other designers to be given solo shows were Yves Saint Laurent in 1983 and Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons in 2017. Neither arrived with Galliano's level of contention.

Among the most prominent backers of the retrospective is former Vogue editor Anna Wintour, a longtime champion of Galliano. "There is no one more deserving of an exhibition of this scale than John Galliano," she wrote on Vogue.com. "The exhibition won't shy away from any of the darkness in John's past. It's part of what has shaped him."

Galliano, who was born in Gibraltar and raised in England, was appointed head designer at Givenchy in 1995. In 2011, he was captured on video making a series of racist and antisemitic comments, causing him to step down from his then position as creative director at Dior. In one of these videos, he was heard saying, "I love Hitler".

Still, he made a controversial comeback in the fashion world in 2014, becoming the creative director of Maison Margiela. Galliano's closing show at Maison Margiela in 2024 was seen as an industry milestone and this September, he is launching a fashion collaboration with Zara.

The Met retrospective might be the final proof that he's made it back into mainstream fashion. Whether his critics will accept that is another matter.

BMW drivers discover they can't escape Spider-Man

Susie Coen New York

Between billboards, TV channels and social media platforms, one might assume production companies have ample avenues to promote their latest film releases.

But the promotion for the latest Marvel film *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* expanded into new territory last week, with adverts displayed on BMW control screens across the United States.

Since July 27, drivers getting into BMW's newer models have been greeted with a banner on the touchscreen reading "Surprise! Spider-Man just dropped into your BMW!" If users clicked the icon, an animation showed Spider-Man jumping over a BMW being driven through New York.

The campaign is part of a partnership with BMW and Sony Pictures, and is set to run until August 10. But the advertising strategy enraged some BMW owners, some of whom had paid $160,000 (£139,000) for a luxury car. Drivers filled online forums with comments that called the scheme "insanely dystopian" and vowed not to buy another car from the German manufacturer.

Car product placement in action films is nothing new, the most notable example being James Bond and Aston Martin, and a BMW features in the latest Spider-Man release. But placing Spider-Man adverts inside the vehicles themselves marks a significant shift from the car manufacturer's previous claims that it would not allow its dashboards to be sold as advertising space.

Beth Donnelly Egan, an advertising professor at Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications, said it was likely that the campaign was part of a brand negotiation rather than something BMW was paid for.

Egan said in-car advertising was a "logical next step" for the industry, which could see manufacturers charge advertisers between $5 million and $10 million to show adverts.

BMW will be able to track data on the number of drivers who saw the banner, those who clicked through on the advert and, potentially, which of those customers then went to see the film.

Drivers had a visit from Spider-Man

World

Trump 'berates Hegseth' for missile crisis

United States
George Grylls Washington

President Trump raged at Pete Hegseth over a shortage of American missiles that in part forced him to cancel airstrikes on Iran, according to reports.

The president announced on Monday he had called off the "biggest attack since World War II", claiming that he had shown clemency to Iran because of progress in peace talks.

However, another rationale was that the Pentagon is running out of precision weapons, having fired 850 Tomahawk cruise missiles and 1,300 tactical ballistic missiles at Iran since February 28, according to The Washington Post. More than 1,000 air defence missiles — Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (Thaad) and Phased Array Tracking Radar to Intercept on Target (Patriot) interceptors — have been fired in the same period.

Learning of the shortages, Trump vented his frustration at Hegseth, the war secretary, at a Camp David meeting last week, believing that the munitions issue "had been fixed", sources told the paper.

Hegseth is said to have blamed his deputy, Stephen Feinberg, for the lack of munitions and for not informing the president.

In a post on Truth Social the president denied the shortages and said anyone who leaked "treasonous statements" would be "hunted down", adding: "Long-term jail sentences will be sought!" Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, said in a post on X that the story was "BS" and "FAKE NEWS".

Stockpiles of the most important weapons in the Pentagon's arsenal have been severely depleted by the five-month war, according to reports. Reuters reported this week that the Pentagon has used "virtually all" of the US Army's surface-to-surface weapons — Army Tactical Missile Systems (Atacms) and Precision Strike Missiles.

When it comes to air defence interceptors, the US has fired 80 per cent of its Thaad missiles and about 50 per cent of its Patriots to shoot down Iranian missiles and drones across the Middle East, according to CNN. The shortage comes at a time when Ukraine is desperately low on interceptors and is virtually unable to defend itself from Russian ballistic-missile attacks.

The squeeze on air defence missiles has forced US commanders to adjust their criteria for shooting down incoming attacks, choosing whether to intercept based on the projected target, according to NBC News.

It will be a struggle for American defence companies to rebuild stockpiles quickly. The US can manufacture about 600 Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (Pac-3) missiles a year. The lead time for the Pac-3 interceptor is two years while the solid rocket motor takes 30 months to build, according to the Foreign Policy Research Institute. That means a Patriot missile ordered now might not arrive until 2029. The Trump administration has been trying to speed up manufacturing and the Pentagon signed a deal with Lockheed Martin this year to make 2,000 Patriot missiles a year by 2030. However, progress has been slow and Lockheed produced only 620 Pac-3 missiles last year.

A single Thaad missile costs between $12 million and $15.5 million and a Patriot interceptor costs between $3.7 million and $4 million. An Atacm costs $1 million to $2 million and a Tomahawk cruise missile costs between $2 million and $2.5 million.

Hegseth recently claimed that the Iran war had cost $37.5 billion, but he is requesting $67 billion in emergency funding to fix a deficit in the Pentagon's budget.

In addition to this, Hegseth wants Congress to approve a $1.5 trillion defence budget for 2027, a 40 per cent increase on the previous year.

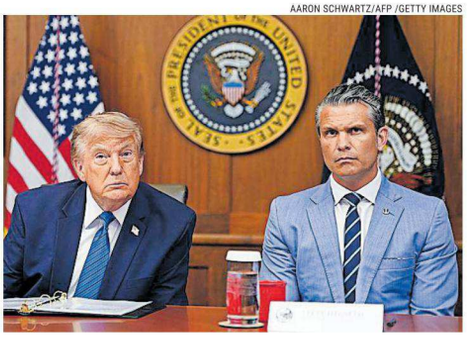
There are signs that Iran is edging towards a deal with Oman to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, paving the way for a longer-term ceasefire. Under the agreement, Tehran would be able to supervise commercial vessels transiting the narrow waterway, but would not charge tolls.

Inbound ships would hug the Iranian coastline, while outbound vessels would go through Omani waters.

Esmail Baghaei, the Iranian foreign ministry spokesman, said the agreement was in the "final stages of review and drafting" provided that "no external party obstructs this process".

It came as Israel's Channel 12 reported that Roman Gofman, the director of Mossad, fired the agency head of intelligence and the head of the Iran desk over failures related to the war.

AARON SCHWARTZ/AFP /GETTY IMAGES



President Trump is said to have confronted his war secretary, Pete Hegseth, at Camp David as a shortage of munitions led him to call off an attack on Iran

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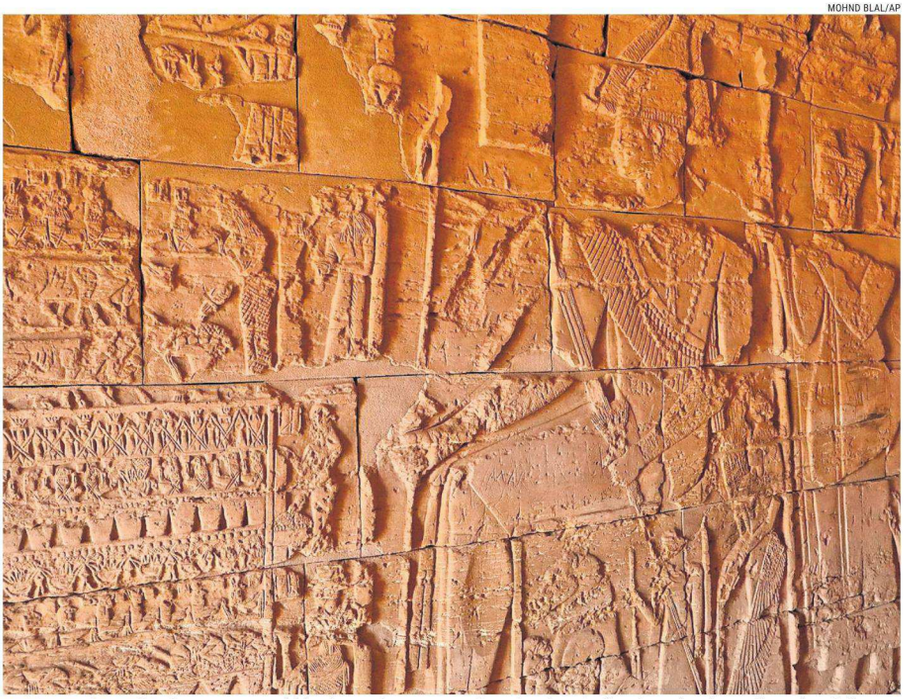


Writing on the wall? **The Unesco world heritage site at Meroe in Bejrawiya, Sudan, is under threat from the civil war in the country. The site's pyramids, 120 miles north of Khartoum, were tombs for the rulers of the Kushite empire**

Settler charged over killing of Palestinian

Israel Prosecutors charged an Israeli settler in the killing of Palestinian activist Awdah Hathaleen in the occupied West Bank, the first such indictment since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, activists said. Israel's ministry of justice said on X that Yinon Eliya Levi, 33, from Ma'on, had been charged with allegedly firing toward an area where people were present in Umm Al-Khair, in the southern West Bank, causing the death of Hathaleen. He is charged with reckless manslaughter, trespassing, and willful property damage. Hathaleen, who took part in the production of the Oscar winning documentary *No Other Land*, was killed in July 2025.

Fine of 53 million eggs for producers who fixed price

United States Three large US egg producers will have to donate 53 million eggs to food banks as part of a legal settlement. A coalition of 17 states sued the producers, alleging they secretly co-ordinated to influence daily egg price quotes widely used in supply contracts. Letitia James, the New York attorney general, said: "Price-fixing of any kind is not tolerated in New York, or across our nation." James said Cal-Maine Foods, Versova and Hickman's Egg Ranch began colluding as early as 2022. The price of a dozen eggs reached an average of $8.47 (£6.30) in New York in February 2025, according to figures the US Department of Agriculture.

Politician admits 'my job is boring' text in meeting

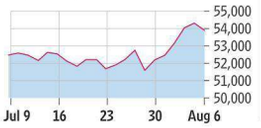
Australia A politician who leads the opposition Liberal Party in the Australian Capital Territory has admitted that he texted "f*** my job is boring. Wanna swap" during a budget estimates hearing. Mark Parton was subject to a complaint alleging that he sent the message to a sex worker. After initially denying the complaint as a "smear", he admitted he did send the text but denied that it was to a sex worker. He did not say who the message was sent to and argued he had still been holding the government to account. He added: "I understand that most people's perception of budget estimates hearings is that they're pretty boring." An official complaint has been dismissed.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,867.89 (-20.41)

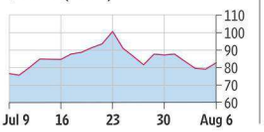
Dow Jones
53,885.10 (-464.02)



COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,249.10 (+20.89)

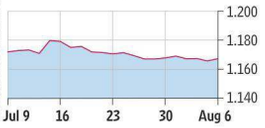
Brent crude (6pm)
$82.70 (+3.70)



CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3454 (-0.0007)

£/€
€1.1671 (+0.0015)



Diageo boss: $1bn shot of cost cuts will revive ailing drinks company

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Sir Dave Lewis secured backing from the City yesterday as Diageo's $1 billion cost-cutting scheme restored investors' hopes that the struggling drinks group can return to growth.

Shares in the FTSE 100 company closed up 91½p, or 5.6 per cent, at £17.33, their highest level since February, after it revealed plans to generate $850 million in savings over the next three years as it continues to restructure, plus a further $150 million of savings through supply chain initiatives. Restructuring costs will total about $1.2 billion, the Johnnie Walker maker said, made by overhauling the operating model, with the loss of thousands of jobs.

Lewis said that Diageo would be "activating our wider portfolio", such as Smirnoff and Captain Morgan, to cater for customers looking to save money.

"The savings will allow us to invest in innovation selectively where we need to improve our competitiveness, but they also allow us to do so without needing to reduce profit", Lewis said.

The market has put its faith in the former Tesco boss to turn around Diageo, which has been weakened in recent years by boardroom turmoil, tariffs, slow growth in key markets such as the United States and shifting consumer drinking patterns.

Lewis's strategy reset was announced alongside Diageo's latest results, which showed organic sales growth contracted 2 per cent to $19.6 billion over the 12 months to the end of June, after its key North American region continued to be problematic. The region, which accounted for 37 per cent of the group's overall sales, saw underlying sales drop 8.4 per cent last year, which it blamed on "increased competitive pressure and further category softness, particularly in tequila".

Lewis admitted that "there is hard work ahead, particularly in North America, where improving performance is a clear priority".

Sales in Asia Pacific also suffered, down 6.3 per cent due to persistent weakness in Chinese spirits, particularly a traditional spirit known as baijiu. Europe delivered growth of 3.4 per cent, buoyed by consumers stocking up before the World Cup, as well as solid growth of Guinness in the UK. Its Latin America and Caribbean region saw growth of 7.7 per cent.

Operating profit fell 27.2 per cent to $3.15 billion, while pre-tax profit fell to £2.56 billion, from £3.5 billion last year.

Diageo's full-year dividend was halved to 50 cents a share in a effort to "create more financial flexibility".

Sober days ahead, pages 34-35

EasyJet says yes to £5.7bn US takeover

Apollo triumphs after airline founder backs deal

Ben Martin Financial Editor

EasyJet is set to be taken private following more than a quarter of a century on the stock exchange after its founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou backed a £5.7 billion buyout.

The budget airline's board said yesterday that it had agreed to a 715p-a-share offer from Apollo Capital Management, the US private equity firm that has been in talks about a deal at that price for a month.

Haji-Ioannou, whose family still own 15.3 per cent of the airline, making them its biggest shareholder and a crucial player in a sale, helped to pave the way for a takeover by coming out in favour of Apollo's terms.

However, rather than selling out to the New York-based buyout house, Haji-Ioannou, 59, and his family plan to remain invested in easyJet by flipping their stake into a private vehicle that will own the airline once it is delisted. They can do this because Apollo's terms include two proposals: investors can either accept 715p in cash for each easyJet share they own, or swap their stock for so-called "rollover shares".

It draws a line under months of speculation about the FTSE 250 airline's future and is the latest in a series of takeovers of London-listed companies, stoking concerns about the UK's shrinking stock market.

Easyjet was founded by the British-Cypriot Haji-Ioannou in 1995 and listed in London at 310p-a-share in 2000.

It emerged in May that Castlelake, another US investment firm, was eyeing the Luton-based airline.

EasyJet has been left vulnerable to a bid because of its languishing share price which had failed to recover after the Covid pandemic caused chaos for aviation. This year's war in the Middle East, which sent jet fuel costs soaring and prompting travellers to make later bookings, also knocked its shares.

The easyJet board, led by its chairman Sir Stephen Hester, reached a tentative agreement last month with Castlelake that valued the airline at 690p-a-share.

That deal was upended days later when it emerged that the board had reached an "agreement in principle" with Apollo pitched at 715p.

Throughout all of this, however, the intentions of Haji-Ioannou were unknown. He broke his silence yesterday when he said he was "pleased with Apollo's strategic intentions for the easyJet business, which aim to create more growth". His family's continued investment will help Apollo meet European Union rules requiring airlines with EU operating licences to be majority-owned by European investors.

Some City analysts have suggested that easyJet's net assets are worth £11.35 a share. While Castlelake said yesterday that it was scrapping its bid, it reserved its right to come back. The Haji-Ioannou family can also withdraw its support for Apollo's offer if a rival bid that is 9 per cent higher is made, easyJet and Apollo said.

EasyJet shares were up 2.8 per cent at 670p at the close yesterday.

FRANK MICELOTTA/FOX SPORTS

Final results Rebecca Lowe hosting World Cup coverage for Fox Sports, whose fourth-quarter revenues of $4.21billion, aided by the tournament, beat forecasts

Doubts over future of Fat Duck chain

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

Heston Blumenthal's restaurant group has warned that "material uncertainty" lingers over its ability to continue as a going concern despite new funding.

Christina Ong, one of Singapore's most successful businesswomen, made a strategic investment in the celebrity chef's restaurant businesses in May to help prop up its balance sheet and fuel potential expansion.

However, accounts signed off this week for SL6 Limited, the holding company for Blumenthal's group, flagged that there was "uncertainty that still exists in the business while it transitions".

Directors warned that a "material uncertainty exists at the year end date that may cast significant doubt on the group's or the parent company's ability to continue as a going concern."

Blumenthal's award-winning restaurants include the Fat Duck in Bray, Berkshire, the restaurant with three Michelin stars that put British "molecular gastronomy" on the map in 1995 by applying scientific principles to cooking. It serves quirky dishes like snail porridge and bacon and egg ice cream. Blumenthal also runs the Hinds Head pub, also in Bray, near Maidenhead.

Turnover rose to £9.1million in the year to the end of May last year, up from £8.9 million the year before. Losses before tax narrowed to £1.7 million, compared with £2.1 million.

At the year-end, it had £203,932 cash in bank and in hand, against £697,605 the year before. Net debt rose to about £2.6 million from £1.8 million.

Directors said the hospitality industry continued to be a tough environment in which to operate. They said that the group was "not immune to the challenges the sector faces and has experienced inflation in both supply chain and people costs. Against this backdrop the decision was taken to not pass on the price increases whilst recognising that this would affect the

Continued on page 34

Need to know

1 Budget airline easyJet is set to be taken private after its founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou backed a £5.7 billion buyout. The carrier's board announced yesterday that it had agreed to a 715p-a-share offer from Apollo Capital Management, the US private equity firm. Page 33

2 Sir Dave Lewis secured backing from the City yesterday as Diageo's $1 billion cost-cutting scheme restored investors' hopes that the struggling drinks group can return to growth. Shares in the FTSE 100 company closed up 91½p, or 5.6 per cent, at £17.33, their highest level since February. Page 33

3 Heston Blumenthal's restaurant group warned that "material uncertainty" lingers over its ability to continue as a going concern despite new funding. The company said the latest accounts "only represent the period until May 2025 and do not capture the progress the business has made since". Page 33

4 The owner of Raleigh, the 139-year-old based bikemaker, is on the verge of collapse after takeover talks fell through. Accell Group, the private equity-owned Dutch bicycle manufacturer, entered court-supervised insolvency proceedings earlier this week.

5 One of Britain's biggest housebuilders has defied the housing slowdown to build more homes in the first six months of the year. Persimmon delivered 5,189 homes in the six months to end of June, a rise of 13 per cent year-on-year. Page 36

6 The slide in revenue has eased at WPP in a boost for efforts by its new boss to turn around the embattled advertising group. It reported a 2.8 per cent decline in underlying revenue for the June quarter, easing from 6.7 per cent during the first three months of the year. Page 38

7 John Whittaker's Peel Group has offered close to £583 million for Harworth Group, a land and property company, to take it private. Peel already has a near 30 per cent stake. Page 39

"On perfect sunny days, loan approval rates rose; on overcast days, they fell

Harry Wallop, page 37

For expert business analysis subscribe to the business newsletter thetimes.com/newsletters

Drinks giant prepares for sober days of reckoning

Boss plans to give Diageo's cabinet a good dusting down as well as making drastic cuts, **Jessica Newman** writes

Not so long ago, Diageo was dangling before investors the prospect of between 5 and 7 per cent medium-term organic sales target, an aim that has proved to be as disconnected from reality as it was ambitious.

Less than two years later, the FTSE 100 spirits company reckons "low-single-digit" organic sales growth is more achievable over the next few years, with operating profits expected to grow by "mid-single" digits.

The guidance, shaped by weakness in the United States, its largest market, was part of a much broader sobering reality check delivered by Sir Dave Lewis, who yesterday unveiled a $1 billion cost-cutting plan in order to reset performance, a significant step up from its previous target of $625 million.

Diageo expects to save the amount over three years, with $850 million from restructuring its outdated and overly complex operating framework.

Another $150 million of savings will come through supply-chain reforms. The cost of both these programmes is expected to total $1.2 billion, with 70 per cent of its expenses already incurred.

The overhaul will result in the loss of thousands of jobs. Lewis, who earned the nickname Drastic Dave from his time at Unilever, before moving on to head Tesco, said the restructuring would have "very significant impacts" on Diageo's workforce, but declined to say how many jobs would be affected. The company's severance costs last year rose sharply to $514 million from $73 million a year earlier.

"One of the things that's been very strong for me coming into Diageo is people have been very clear that things needed to change," he said, adding that much of the business had been suffering from a "very large amount of duplication. The consequences of that are not great for everybody".

Although the City had largely anticipated Lewis would increase Diageo's cost savings target, Edward Mundy, an analyst at Jefferies, pointed out that the savings were greater than even the market had expected.

Lewis said Diageo's turnaround would be "organic", focused on fixing structural internal issues. "We're not thinking about M&A, and I want people to be really clear about that", he said. "We have what we need to turn our business around".

A key part of the Diageo reorganisation will be implemented on a category-by-category approach, such as looking at whisky as a whole, rather than by individual brands.

Lewis also used the strategy update to provide some insight on his plans for Diageo to renew focus on some of the more neglected brands in its 200-strong drinks cabinet.

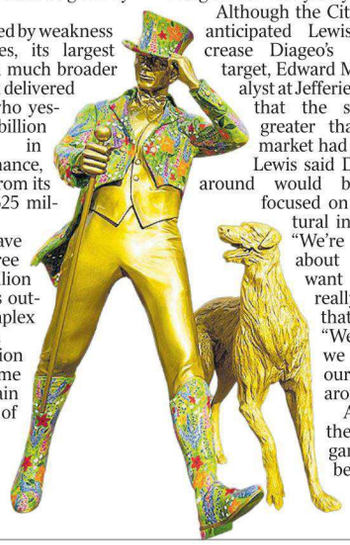
Under the leadership of the late Sir Ivan Menezes, Diageo was transformed into a globally diversified drinks behemoth, moving upmarket by adding celebrity-backed tequilas and premium whiskies to its portfolio.

One of the most high-profile deals was with Casamigos, the tequila brand co-founded by George Clooney. The $1 billion deal brought a shot of star power to Diageo, helping to modernise its image and tap into one of the fastest-growing categories in global spirits at the time.

While Lewis is steadfast in his defence of Diageo's historical focus on premium labels, describing the strategy as a "great value creator", he also acknowledged the business could not just cling to past successes and must start to cater to what customers actually wanted to drink.

"When I look at the US business I've seen some weakness in core brands for a number of years that has been covered up by the growth of tequila," he said.

Lewis picked out Captain Morgan rum and Smirnoff vodka as a couple of "very big, very important brands,



The King opened a Guinness brewery. The Johnnie Walker distillery, right

Pints then points

Raleigh bike owner close to collapse

Isabella Fish, Retail Editor

The owner of Raleigh, the 139-year-old Nottinghamshire-based bikemaker, is on the verge of collapse after takeover talks fell through.

Accell Group, the private equity-owned Dutch bicycle manufacturer owning brands including Raleigh, Haibike, Lapierre and Ghost, entered court-supervised insolvency proceedings earlier this week.

Jonas Nilsson, chief executive, said it was a "deeply sad and frustrating situation" and that it had "tirelessly explored" every option for the future of the cycling business.

Accell, bought Raleigh, one of Britain's best-known bicycle brands, in 2012 for about $100 million.

Raleigh was founded in Nottingham in 1887 and grew to be the largest bike manufacturer in the world. It created the Chopper, with extended handlebars and seat with a backrest, in the 1970s. The company no longer makes bikes in Nottingham and has moved to Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, while it has shifted to selling electric bikes.

KKR, the US private equity company, acquired Accell in 2022 for €1.56 billion using a mix of equity and debt, assuming pandemic-era cycling demand would persist. By saddling Accell with hundreds of millions in debt just before the bike boom collapsed, cash flow was severely squeezed by interest payments and falling revenues.

Accell went through a restructuring in February, resulting in a substantial debt reduction and transfer of majority control from KKR to its syndicate of lenders. In January, Accell sold its titanium specialist brand Van Nicholas to the Italian manufacturer Velo-ce.

Accell said it had "explored every possible avenue" for its future, including discussions with potential buyers. A takeover by Singapore-based DuTech Group fell through despite receiving prior regulatory approvals in Germany, Austria, and Poland.

The company has now begun insolvency proceedings in the Netherlands, known as suspension of payments.

Raleigh reported a pre-tax loss of £30.1 million for 2023 in accounts filed in January 2025, compared with a £6.8 million loss in 2022. This was despite a 3.5 per cent rise in turnover to £57.7 million, driven by post-pandemic market overstock and high price pressures.

Nilsson said: "This is a deeply sad and frustrating situation. Every realistic option for the future of the business has been tirelessly explored and none have resulted in a solution to continue the group in its current form."

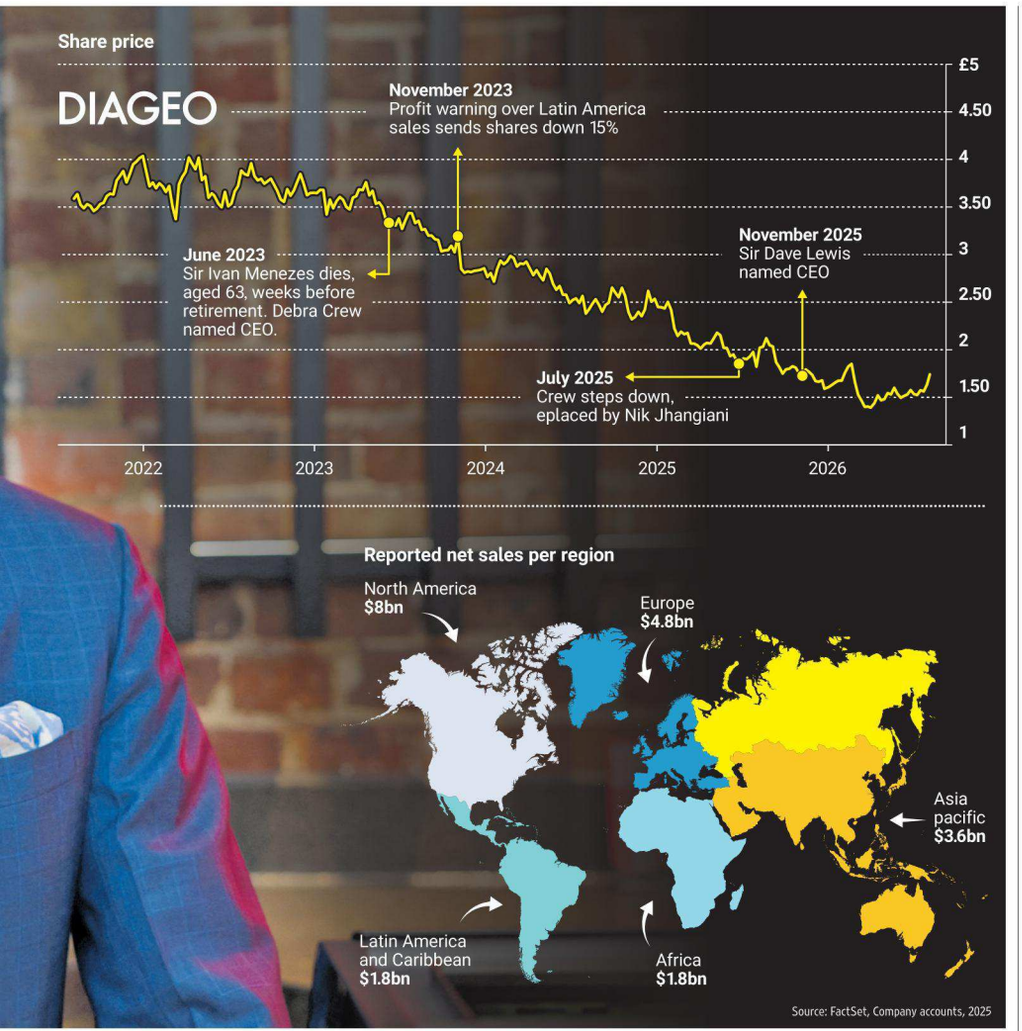
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Fat Duck Group sees progress

profitability of the group". The company said the latest accounts "only represent the period until May 2025 and do not capture the progress the business has made since".

It said: "The Fat Duck has achieved its highest annual profitability to date, while the Hinds Head has delivered three consecutive years of double-digit growth. This progress has been achieved with a strengthened leadership team, significant operational efficiencies, and a renewed focus on our two core businesses, the Fat Duck and the Hinds Head."

After the year-end, the group refinanced its two 10-year bank loans — a £680,000 loan repayable at maturity and a £1.4 million loan repayable monthly — through an external agreement with Como Holdings Limited. Como Group is controlled by the billionaire Ong family.



which quite frankly we've not done a great job with."

At the heart of Lewis's strategy lies a belief that lower price tags on cheaper drinks will successfully stimulate enough additional demand to offset any margin compression.

He said there were already signs this shift was working among some products such as Bell's, with a litre bottle of the blended whisky now being sold for £18.50 in some supermarkets, down from £25 last year.

Another growth lever he believes Diageo has been slow to pull is ready-to-drink canned cocktails, which is the one sector of the spirits market that is experiencing significant global growth.

Diageo's ready-to-drink portfolio consists mainly of extensions of its established labels, such as Smirnoff Ice, a 27-year-old brand that has effectively been left alone at the back of the cupboard.

Management is also bullish on plans to capitalise on the Guinness label, revealing plans to spend almost $1 billion until 2030 on increasing capacity and expanding the Irish stout globally.

Meanwhile, in the US where it has struggled with persistently sluggish sales, the company will prioritise three brands it admitted have been in long-term decline: Smirnoff, Captain Morgan and Crown Royal whisky by improving packaging, launching trademark campaigns and introducing smaller, cheaper bottle sizes.

The company is also confident it can restore consumer's love affair with premium tequila brands including Don Julio and Casaminos by utilising the platforms of content creators and bringing in smaller bottle sizes so budget-conscious consumers can access the brand.

The market clearly saw Lewis's highly anticipated strategy update as a turning point, with shares rising 5.6 per cent to a five-month high of £17.32½. But they are a long way off their £41 high of 2022.

Lewis may have set the course, but sentiment is fragile, and investors will need proof in the execution if he is to achieve another turnaround triumph.

Paramount wins British backing for Warner deal

Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

Paramount Skydance has promised to ensure that Channel 5 News maintains its editorial independence and pledged to continue commissioning content in Britain in order to stop the UK government blocking its $110 billion takeover of Warner Bros Discovery.

Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, wrote to the companies in June to inform them she was "minded" to intervene in the transaction on public interest grounds. These included the need for "sufficient" plurality of views in news in the UK, as well as media ownership. However, yesterday she said she had decided not to intervene after receiving assurances and legally binding commitments from Paramount.

In the UK, the merger will see Paramount combine television channels including Channel 5, TNT Sports and Nickelodeon with Warner Bros's CNN International, Cartoon Network and HBO Max, as well as bringing together the streaming services Paramount+ and HBO Max.

Channel 5 would continue as a public service broadcaster until its licence expires in 2034 and remain editorially separate from CNN International and CBS News. Paramount has also agreed that its UK services would retain distinct editorial identities for five years.

Paramount, led by David Ellison, offered legally binding guarantees on British commissioning for five years, promising no reduction in the number of commissioning staff, or the quality and range of content. It has committed itself to providing government officials with annual statements of compliance that will be monitored.

Separately, the Competition and Markets Authority, the UK's competition watchdog, also said yesterday that it would not take further action.

EU regulators have already passed the deal, leaving 12 US states that are seeking to block it on antitrust grounds as the final big hurdle. Paramount has agreed to pause the deal until June 2027, while a federal trial is set for March.

Warner Bros reported revenue of $8.72 billion in the second quarter, well below forecasts of $9.29 billion, after lacklustre box-office performance and soft advertising sales. Studio revenue fell 39 per cent to $2.3 billion.

Warner's streaming business performed better: HBO Max's revenue up 10 per cent to $3.1 billion.

Warner Bros shares advanced $0.47, or 1.8 per cent, to $26.44 in morning trading in New York. Paramount rose $0.39, or 4.5 per cent, to $9.16.

Whizzy plane lease idea is up in air

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Some airlines look trickier to fly than others. Take Wizz Air, where its founder and chief executive Jozsef Varadi has, like his rivals, been navigating an "extremely volatile" June quarter — three months punctuated by the "conflict in the Middle East, elevated fuel prices and changes in booking patterns".

The main difference for him? He's flying what looks like an accounting puzzler with wings: a business racking up debt that would arguably be making vast losses if it wasn't for some nifty financial engineering selling and leasing back its planes.

This is not to suggest Wizz is in financial trouble. It says it has tons of "liquidity", with a "strong cash position of €2.21 billion". But, it's not for nothing that Wizz is one of the most shorted stocks on the London market, with those betting against it holding 9.1 per cent of the shares.

It's not only short-sellers who are asking the question: is Wizz's business model sustainable? Already, its net debt, up 3.9 per cent in the last quarter to €5.13 billion, is four times its market cap: £1.15 billion after a 3 per cent share price fall to £11.10 on the quarterly results. And it's hard to see why those metrics will improve any time soon.

It's a point that Varadi's opposite number at Ryanair, Michael O'Leary, has been loudly making. Last month, in a quarterly earnings call, he declared: "Wizz will just blow their brains out this winter". Varadi, who co-founded the eastern European-focused carrier in 2003, has greeted it with wry humour. He told the Hungarian media outlet G7: "I think we've gone bankrupt at least ten times according to him. Look at our figures: we have two billion euros in cash".

Yet, O'Leary made a key point. As he put it, the only way Wizz is preserving a veneer of profitability is "to keep taking aircraft and then doing sale and leasebacks and recognising that through the P&L" (profit and loss account). It is a point that the Panmure Liberum analyst Gerald Khoo has been making, noting that Wizz's full-year figures came with "the usual tailwind from low-quality earnings sources".

The crucial line at the full-year accounts was €542 million of "other income", up from €496 million the previous year. Wizz said €256 million of that, up from €121 million, was "gains from sale and leaseback transactions" on 33 planes: all part of a fleet renewal programme — mainly Airbus A321neo aircraft — that still sees Wizz awaiting 244 firm deliveries.

Indeed, it wasn't just the planes Wizz was selling and leasing back but 18 engines. Most of the rest of the "other income" was Pratt & Whitney compensation for the grounding of aircraft due to mandatory checks on its engines.

Airlines can make a profit on sale and leasebacks by selling to lessors at the market price aircraft that they bought at a wholesale discount from Airbus or Boeing. Yet they have a choice over what to do with that profit — use it to cut future lease liabilities or take it upfront through the P&L to boost short-term profits.

Wizz is taking the latter approach. One result? Without such sale and leaseback gains last year, Wizz's tiny €1.3 million net profit would have been a €255 million loss. Worse, don't such deals raise future leasing costs at a group already lugging around €5 billion of net debt?

The latest figures include €53 million of sale and leaseback gains in a quarter where ebitda halved to €147 million and Wizz had a €198 million net loss. In Khoo's view, such gains on aircraft sales are becoming Wizz's key route to generating cash. The problem? "They can't stop taking new aircraft because their source of finance disappears".

To all this, Wizz says: "Sale and leasebacks take the residual value risk of the asset away from Wizz, allowing us to focus on flying and not managing legacy aircraft," adding it only books "a third" of the upfront gains through the P&L. It admits that this "does add costs in terms of higher lease payments". But it says "modelling on a net present value basis suggests that sale and leasebacks can be value accretive".

Well, maybe. But to judge by a share price down from £52 in five years, the market seems to be taking a different view.

Tonic for Diageo

What a shock: it's more fun working your way through the Diageo drinks cabinet than listening to Sir "Drastic" Dave Lewis bang on about it. After an interminable capital markets day, starring its newish boss and team, analysts would have been forgiven for mixing a big cocktail of Johnnie Walker whisky, Don Julio tequila, Tanqueray gin, Captain Morgan rum and Baileys and downing it in one.

Still, the shares went up 5.6 per cent to £17.32½, as Lewis at least brought more forensics to the Diageo revamp than has been seen for years, with the welcome message that he'd turned away the bankers urging idiotic brand sales to bring a wholly "organic" fix. It comes with $1 billion of cost cuts; a big push for Guinness; the launch of "stunning" ready-to-drink cocktails in cans; and everything from new price points to packaging in its key North American wing, where two thirds of the brands including Crown Royal, Smirnoff and Captain Morgan have been losing share. Who knows if it'll actually work. But Lewis passed the early taste test.

Castlelake circles

Technically, Castlelake could yet come back. Its exit from the easyJet bid battle came with the caveat that it "reserved the right" to have another go if anyone announced a "firm" offer, including Apollo. But that's a long shot, not least with Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou irrevocably rolling over his family's 15.3 per cent stake behind Apollo's £5.7 billion offer at 715p unless someone else bids "at least nine per cent" more. At 670p, easyJet shares imply a nice smooth Apollo landing.

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Business

Housing ladder missing rungs as more owners opt to stay put

David Byers Deputy Property Editor

Homeowners are hanging on to their properties for longer because of the higher costs involved in a move.

Research from Connells Group, the UK's largest high street estate and lettings agency with more than 1,200 branches, found that only 5 per cent of those who sold this year in England and Wales had owned their home for three years or less. This is the lowest share of short-term owners on record, down from 15 per cent in 2006.

Meanwhile, the share of owners selling up within five years has halved over the past 20 years, from 29 per cent in 2006 to 14 per cent so far this year.

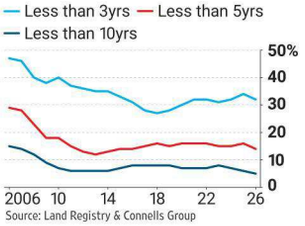
Analysts said a combination of high moving costs, particularly stamp duty, expensive mortgages and longstanding affordability issues were encouraging families to move less frequently.

"Homeowners are finding that moving no longer pays," Aneisha Beveridge, research director at Connells Group, said. "The result is that homeowners are less likely to make small, incremental steps up or down the housing ladder. When they move, it increasingly needs to be a bigger, longer-term decision."

The average property costs seven times the average wage, according to the Office for National Statistics — almost double the level in 1995 — while landlords facing higher taxes are investing less frequently, with 25 per cent fewer homes available to rent compared with before the Covid pandemic.

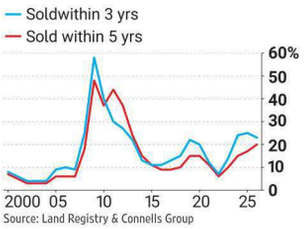
The typical mover in England spent £5,950 on stamp duty this year, rising to £23,000 in London, before legal, estate agency, mortgage or removal costs were taken into account, according to Connells. Beveridge said families were stuck in homes that no longer suited them. "Whether it's having children, changing jobs or downsizing, households need flexibility to adapt housing to their circumstances. Instead, we're seeing growing financial barriers make those moves harder to justify."

Share of homes sold within 10 years or less of purchase across England & Wales



Source: Land Registry & Connells Group

Share of homeowners selling at a loss within 3 and 5 years of buying



Source: Land Registry & Connells Group

Owners are getting stuck for longer in homes in the southeast, where prices are most expensive and moving costs prohibitive. In London, 9 per cent of sellers this year owned homes for five years or less and 12 per cent in the southeast, but in the northeast the number of short-term owners was 17 per cent and in Yorkshire and the Humber, 15 per cent. "If homeowners were moving as frequently as in 2006, we would see around 439,000 additional transactions each year," Beveridge said.

The data also showed how sluggish price growth has hit a number of homeowners' bank balances upon selling, with a rising proportion of sellers now having to stomach a loss on their homes when they sell them compared with the boom years of the 2000s.

In England and Wales 20 per cent of owners who sold in five or less years and 23 per cent of those selling within three years took a loss, up from 6 per cent and 10 per cent respectively in 2006. Londoners are hardest-hit by price depreciation, with an estimated 21 per cent of homes in the capital worth less than their owner paid, compared with a 7.9 per cent average in England and Wales. Meanwhile, 32 per cent of homes bought for £1 million or more are worth less than the purchase price.

Persimmon defies sector slowdown as builds up 13%

Martin Strydom

One of Britain's biggest housebuilders has defied the housing slowdown to build more homes in the first six months of the year.

Persimmon delivered 5,189 homes in the six months to the end of June, a rise of 13 per cent year-on-year, and expects full-year completions to be at the upper end of its guidance of about 12,500 as the company weathers a difficult market better than rivals.

Average sales prices rose 1 per cent to £285,752, helped by strong demand at its premium Charles Church brand, where completions increased 25 per cent to 555 homes. Strategic partnerships led deliveries to housing associations to increase by 50 per cent to 928 units.

The strong performance lifted pretax profits by 15 per cent to £168 million on revenue up 15 per cent to £1.73 billion. Persimmon shares rose 2.9 per cent, or 32½p, to £11.56 at the close yesterday, despite the FTSE 100 company cautioning that global trade frictions and the Middle East conflict could add between £40 million and £50 million in costs over the next 18 months.

Dean Finch, the chief executive, said that despite a challenging market, "with affordability constraints and build cost pressures", the company remained on track to deliver full-year underlying pre-tax profits of £454 million.

The builder's in-house manufacturing capabilities in bricks, roof tiles and timber frames have allowed it to cope with rising costs better than rivals.

Rival housebuilder Taylor Wimpey has halved the amount of money it returns to shareholders each year amid a "prolonged market downturn" that it fears will persist for a while longer yet. Taylor Wimpey, Barratt Redrow and Berkeley have also reduced land bank targets, but Persimmon has continued to invest.

However, the company said buyer inquiries softened in July and open market sales, excluding bulk deals, slipped below the previous year's levels in the five weeks to early August.

The housing market has gone into reverse since the war in Iran started, which drove up mortgage rates and knocked already fragile consumer confidence. More recently, estate agents and other developers have said that a combination of the World Cup, the heatwave and a new prime minister have further slowed the market over the past couple of months.

Finch said that the "housing market continues to experience both a long-term undersupply of housing and affordability challenges for new homeowners, which is a key focus for the new government". Andy Burnham, the prime minister, plans to spend £39 billion on "the biggest council housebuilding programme since the postwar period" and prioritise brownfield sites to protect green spaces and regenerate urban land.

Persimmon said the Middle East conflict could add up to £50 million in costs

The construction of council houses has fallen sharply across England since the 1980s, with many local authority homes sold off under the right-to-buy policy.

Sir Keir Starmer's government was on track to miss its five-year target to build 1.5 million new homes in England by 662,500.

Analysts at Jefferies said: "Compared to others, this trading update from Persimmon appears confident. Management is comfortable with market forecasts for the full year 2026, albeit we note this has slipped mildly in the past two months — current underlying profit before tax of £454 million vs £462 million previously."

Zaim Beekawa, executive director of equity research at JP Morgan, said it was "a good set of results", adding that the guidance upgrade should reassure investors at a time when some rivals have cut targets for building new homes.

Homes target in doubt with construction in doldrums

Jack Barnett

Andy Burnham may be at risk of missing the Labour manifesto target of building 1.5 million new homes by 2029 across the current parliament after figures showed that housing construction continued to contract sharply.

The S&P Global purchasing managers' index (PMI) for the UK's construction industry climbed to 44.7 in July from 38.4 in the previous month, above the consensus forecast but still well below the 50-point threshold that separates growth from contraction.

Although the housebuilding subindex rose to its highest level since October last year, it remained deeply in contraction territory at 41.8. The dire housing PMI readings suggest the Labour government will struggle to meet its manifesto commitment.

Analysts said builders were wary about taking on new staff and cautious about future trading conditions owing to uncertainty over how long construction costs will remain high amid the indefinite closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Tim Moore, economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said: "Construction companies commented on fuel surcharges and higher raw material prices due to the war in the Middle East, but the overall rate of cost inflation was the lowest for five months."

Kiran Raichura, chief commercial real estate economist at Capital Economics, said: "Although we expect another reopening of the [Hormuz] Strait soon, the uncertainty caused by this second wave of hostilities is likely to keep any recovery in construction ... subdued."

Some pointed out that PMI readings were being driven by sluggish sentiment rather than a steep drop in output.

Rob Wood, chief UK economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said: "The PMI has been far too downbeat for an extended period, so we take the depressing mood music with a pinch of salt. Miserable sentiment suggests output is hardly likely to rise quickly, but ... further falls aren't on the cards either."

Construction represents a small share of UK economic output, which is mainly driven by the services industry. The services PMI signalled a return to growth in July, with the index rising above the 50-point threshold to 52.1 from 48.8 in June.

The manufacturing survey dipped to 51.9 from 52.5 over the same period.

Harry Wallop

How do you avoid market blunders? By recognising you could be wrong

Allbirds was an achingly right-on footwear brand. The shoes were made of eucalyptus, wool and sugar cane; Leonardo DiCaprio was an investor and early fans included Gwyneth Paltrow, Emma Watson and Barack Obama. When shares were listed on Nasdaq in 2021, Allbirds was valued at over $4 billion.

There was a flaw, however. The shoes were expensive and sometimes fell apart in a matter of months. By earlier this year the value had fallen to just $39 million.

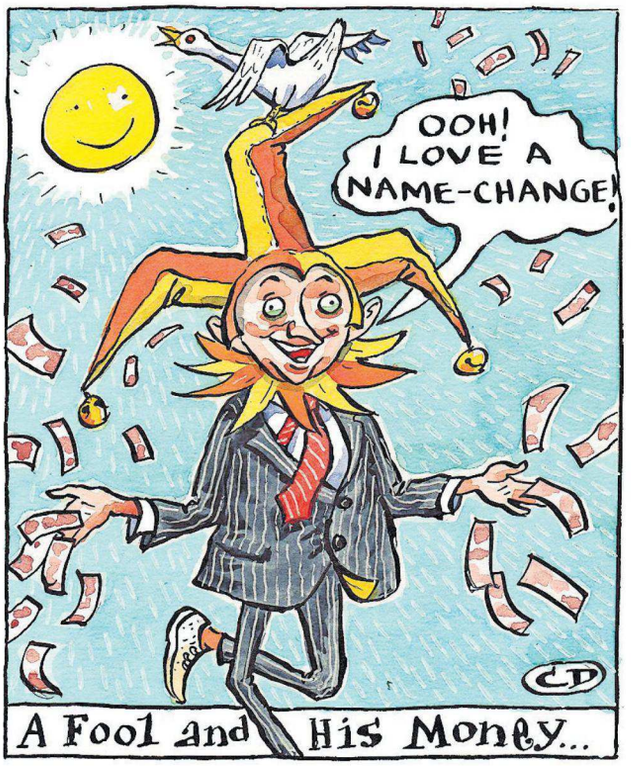
Then something remarkable happened. In April it announced it was ditching its shoe business to become an "AI compute infrastructure" firm (no, me neither) and changing its name to NewBird AI. The shares jumped 580 per cent in a day.

Investors — without knowing anything about the strategy — rushed to buy the shares of this whizzy new AI venture.

This is not the first time that a company name change has caused investors to behave idiotically. In 1999, a chain of boring Californian bookshops, Computer Literacy, rebranded as Fatbrain.com — its shares jumped 36 per cent in a single day. Indeed, between 1998 and 1999, the height of the dotcom boom, 95 publicly traded companies added .com, .net or internet to their names and their shares jumped by an average of 74 per cent in the ten days after the rebrand, even if there was no change to the business, according to a study by Purdue University.

This study is cited in an entertaining book, out in September, *The Madness of Markets*. It is written by Alex Edmans, a professor of finance who made a name for himself 20 years ago for a frivolous — though fascinating — bit of research: a stock market goes down the day after the corresponding national team loses at football. Why? Because traders feel despondent and are more prone to sell shares than buy them.

Ever since then, he has been fascinated at how individual investors and entire markets behave irrationally. Those who work in the City like to claim that they know how to value shares and get a better than average return for their clients. In many cases they are clueless, failing



to understand that humans are prone to terrible biases, fluctuating hormones and even the vicissitudes of the weather.

American academics analysed the relationship between morning sunshine and stock markets across 26 countries from 1982 to 1997: when the skies darkened, the market did too, when it was sunnier than normal, stock markets went up.

This has nothing to do with pub companies and ice-cream makers doing well when the sun shines, this was the entire market.

If you are sceptical, clear blue skies also have a noticeable effect on home loans. One study looked at three million mortgage applications in the United States, looking at the cloud cover in each county on the exact day a decision was made. On perfect, sunny days, loan approval rates rose, on overcast days they fell. This equated to $150 million extra credit approvals — on a single day.

It's not "the computer says no"; the human got out of the right side of the bed, opened their curtains and had a spring in their step. Whether we get the money to buy a house, it would seem, doesn't just come down to our credit scores, but the mood of the person making the decision.

The question is whether you can capitalise on these human foibles. Luckily, Edmans's book is filled with plenty of advice on how to spot buy and sell signals.

Possibly my favourite is when you can tell the chief executive is more interested in lining their own pocket, rather than that of their shareholders. It's not their eyewatering pay nor their bonus — which, to be fair, is often linked to share price performance — it's their use of corporate jets.

Back in the 1980s, notoriously, RJR Nabisco had 36 pilots flying ten private planes that carried not only executives but also the chief executive's dog Rocco, (listed as passenger G Shepherd) to golf tournaments.

This prompted David Yermack, of the Stern Business School, to dig further and discover that the shares of companies that use corporate jets underperform the market by 4 per cent a year, wiping an average of $300 million off the company's value — more than a jet costs. His conclusion was that the management had a reckless disregard for costs which was unhealthy to the long-term profitability of the company.

The most compelling investment strategy, based on psychology, is the power of momentum. Shares that have gone up recently will continue to go up, those that have done badly will continue to fall — not because they are intrinsically good or weak companies, but because the market is slow to react, investors are prone to confirmation bias and it moves as a herd. According to a study in the Journal of Finance, this was true across 58 markets — equities, bonds, commodities, currencies, gold, oil. Buy if the instrument has been positive for 12 months, sell if it has been negative and then hold this position for a month. You will make a stunning 15 per cent return a year.

We all like to think we are terribly clever, or that our stockbroker must be — otherwise why are they charging such big fees? But let's not kid ourselves. Many of us are like the fools who — in the early days of Covid — sent the share price of Zoom Technologies, a semi-dormant Chinese company, up 1,500 per cent, because they mistook it for Zoom, the video conference company.

And the imbeciles who rushed to buy New Birds AI? Shares are below where they were before the name change. The trick is to recognise that you are a fool and avoid others' greater foolishness. Edmans's book is a very useful primer.

Harry Wallop is a consumer journalist and broadcaster. Follow him on X @hwallop

SoftBank given $8bn boost from Intel stake

Chris Dorrell

Profit at the world's largest technology investor fell by less than expected after the company booked a gain of more than $8 billion on its stake in Intel, the US chipmaker.

SoftBank reported a net income of ¥347.3 billion ($2.2 billion) for the three months to June, 17.7 per cent lower than the same period last year, but well ahead of market expectations.

The Japanese tech group, led by chairman and chief executive, Masayoshi Son, invested $2 billion in Intel last year, when its shares were trading at $23 per share. Intel stock has made significant gains over the past 12 months amid the wider semiconductor rally, and now trades at over $100.

SoftBank also reported a ¥358.4 billion gain on its investment in ByteDance, the TikTok owner. This helped to offset a weaker performance at SoftBank's vision funds, which invest in high-growth tech companies. The vision funds reported a ¥255.8 billion gain on investment in the period, nearly 65 per cent lower than last year.

SoftBank has notched some spectacular successes, including early bets in Alibaba and Arm Holdings, alongside the odd implosion, such as WeWork.

Son previously described SoftBank's "ultimate mission" as supporting evolution through the development of artificial superintelligence, and the company has built stakes in a range of companies central to the AI economy, such as the British semiconductor company Arm Holdings — by far SoftBank's largest holding — and OpenAI.

SoftBank's cumulative investment in the ChatGPT-maker is expected to surpass $60 billion by year-end, which would give it a stake of 13 per cent. OpenAI is looking to go public, but reports suggested that any potential initial public offering might be pushed back, delaying the potential payoff.

Some investors have grown concerned that SoftBank has taken on substantial debt to finance its investments without a timeline for monetisation. It agreed a one-year $40 billion bridge loan in March to finance investments.

Its exposure to AI has also contributed to volatility in its share price. The company briefly became Japan's most valuable public company in early June, after its shares gained over 80 per cent. However, investor concerns about the sustainability of the AI boom have weighed more recently, and the stock has fallen by about a third from its peak.

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Business

WPP stems revenue slide under new boss

Emma Powell Media and Telecoms Editor

The slide in revenue has eased at WPP in a tentative boost for efforts by its new boss to turn around the embattled advertising group.

Britain's largest advertising group reported a 2.8 per cent decline in underlying revenue for the June quarter, easing from 6.7 per cent during the first three months of the year. Over the first six months of the year, like-for-like revenue was 4.7 per cent lower.

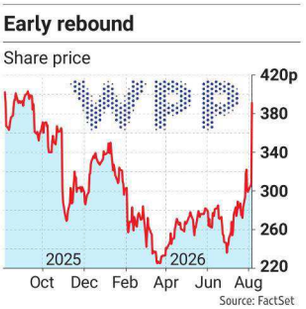
WPP shares closed more than 28 per cent higher at 395p yesterday.

The company had guided towards underlying revenue falling in the "mid to high single-digits" in the first half and being on an "improving trajectory" in the latter six months of the year.

City analysts had forecast a 6 per cent decline in revenue on an underlying basis for the second quarter and 6.5 per cent for the half-year.

Cindy Rose, who was appointed to lead the FTSE 250 constituent in September, said that while "legacy account losses" continued to weigh on its performance, plans to stabilise the business were on track.

WPP has been grappling with a series of high-profile client losses and a macroeconomic downturn that has prompted brands to cut advertising spending.



However, Rose said: "Clients are definitely facing into headwinds for sure, but we haven't seen a noticeable pullback on marketing investment."

In February, Rose set out a structural overhaul intended to simplify the advertising group's sprawling operations and save £500 million in costs by 2028. It is on track to make £100 million in savings this year, the company said.

Hundreds of operating units are being combined into just four — creative, production, media and enterprise solutions — and bonus structures have been unified, in an effort to break down siloed ways of working, Rose said

"It used to be in the old world that you could do very well within your agency P&L even if WPP wasn't doing very well. And that is no longer possible," she said.

The former Microsoft executive is aiming to return the group to organic growth at some point next year. Staff numbers were cut by almost 6,700 to just under 97,400 over the 12 months to the end of June.

The company is expected to sell low-growth businesses and use the proceeds to help strengthen its balance sheet. Proceeds of about £200 million are expected this year from non-core disposals, the company said.

Adjusted net debt was £2.9 billion at the end of June, down from £3.3 billion a year earlier.

The Times previously reported that advisers at Goldman Sachs were exploring strategic options for the communications agency Burson, which could pave the way for an eventual sale. Burson was formed via the merger of BCW and Hill & Knowlton, WPP's two largest communications agencies, in 2024 and employs about 6,000 people globally.

Rose has made some early new business wins, including the global media account for Estée Lauder, the beauty company, and Jaguar Land Rover, as well as the European media work for Henkel Consumer Brands.

Statutory revenue at WPP declined by 4.4 per cent to £6.4 billion, while pretax profits rose by 8 per cent to £106 million, on the back of lower staff and restructuring costs.

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News Corp growth beats expectations

Louisa Clarence-Smith

News Corporation beat Wall Street's fourth-quarter sales expectations after strong growth at its Dow Jones news and data intelligence platform, higher book sales and increased revenues from digital real estate services.

The multimedia group, which owns The Times, The Sunday Times and The Sun as well as The Wall Street Journal, the New York Post and The Australian, said overall revenue for the three months to the end of June grew 11 per cent to $2.3 billion, beating analysts' estimates of $2.2 billion on average. Net income from continuing operations rose 167 per cent to $230 million.

Robert Thomson, chief executive, said: "Our record performance is a product of sustained focus on, and reinvestment in, News Corp's core growth engines and our transformation to a digital-first company underpinned by insightful and trusted content."

He said that artificial intelligence "is only as useful and only as trustworthy as the quality of its inputs", making News Corp "an absolutely critical participant in the emerging AI ecosystem". He added: "Without our journalists, our authors, our data, our brands and our professional expertise, users would be drowning in a slimy sea of AI slop."

The Dow Jones division, which includes The Wall Street Journal, Barron's, MarketWatch and Investor's Business Daily, reported a 7 per cent rise in revenues to $644 million, with circulation and subscription revenues and digital advertising revenues all up.

Revenues from digital real estate services climbed 19 per cent to $553 million, driven by increased sales at REA Group and Move, the digital media businesses specialising in property.

The book publishing unit, which owns HarperCollins, saw its revenue up 15 per cent to $566 million.

The Times and The Sunday Times, including the Times Literary Supplement, recorded 681,000 digital subscriptions at the end of June, compared with 640,000 in the previous year.

Kantar's Levings to lead YouGov

Charlotte Bend

YouGov, the research data and analytics group, has appointed Kantar's Wayne Levings to succeed Stephan Shakespeare as chief executive.

Levings, 56, has held senior roles at the market research company including country leader for North America and chief executive officer of Kantar retail. He will join as chief executive officer elect on November 1, assuming the full job role by February 1, 2027, to coincide with Shakespeare stepping down from his executive responsibilities in six months time to remain on the board as non-executive director.

Shares in YouGov, which trade on the AIM market, closed up 13p, or 5 per cent, at 274p yesterday.

In February, the former ITV executive Ian Griffiths was appointed as chairman, leading the search for a chief executive after Steve Hatch left abruptly at the start of 2025. His departure came months after a warning over the company's performance which sent the shares down 40 per cent in one day.

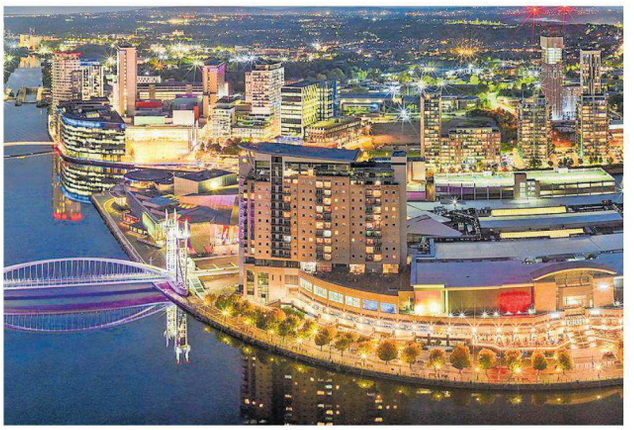
YouGov was co-founded by Shakespeare in 2000, alongside Nadhim Zahawi, the former Conservative chancellor. Shakespeare was brought back in to lead the company during the search for a permanent successor to Hatch.

With operations in the Americas, mainland Europe, the UK and Asia Pacific, YouGov claims to have one of the world's largest research networks. It has millions of members across 64 markets allowing it to run "panels" that inform companies about the consumer perception of their brands. Its data is the most quoted market research brand by the world's media, according to media intelligence company, Meltwater.

The group also announced that it expected to deliver its full-year performance in line with previous guidance.

YouGov said it was contending with a slowdown in advertising spending as companies reassessed budgets.

The group agreed to amended terms for its loan facility, giving it more flexibility to continue the review of its Shopper division, launched in March.



ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

Regeneration firm's biggest shareholder wants it all

Harworth oversaw redevelopment of the former Ironbridge power station in Shropshire, which it sold in 2023. Peel Group, founded by John Whittaker, below, was involved in the regeneration of Salford Quays and is Harworth's largest shareholder

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

John Whittaker's Peel Group has offered close to £583 million to acquire Harworth Group, a land and property regeneration company and take it private.

Peel is already the largest shareholder in Harworth with a nearly 30 per cent stake. Part of the group, Peel Pepper, has offered 172½p in cash per Harworth share for the remainder of the shares, a premium of about 20.1 per cent to its closing share price on August 5.

Peel Holdings said it believed Harworth's assets would be "best owned, managed and developed" under full private ownership. In response, Harworth said its board has "had no substantive engagement with Peel about any offer before their announcement yesterday. The board is reviewing the terms of the offer with its advisers and a further announcement will be made as appropriate."

Shares in Harworth closed up 34½p, or 24 per cent, at 178p, the highest in almost a year.

Harworth owns and manages about 15,000 acres across 100 sites in the north of England and the Midlands, with the potential to build industrial space and allow 29,000 homes to be built.

It oversaw the redevelopment of the former Ironbridge power station in Shropshire, which was sold to Taylor Wimpey for £20 million in 2023, and has been shifting its focus more towards industrial and logistics developments. It sold a data centre development to Microsoft for £106.6 million in 2024 and has identified a second site that it believes is suitable for an artificial intelligence data centre. It said this week it was in "advanced negotiations with several counterparties for the sale of the site" which is expected to sell for a higher price than the Microsoft deal. It has also said there were similar "data centre opportunities" in its portfolio.

Peel Group, which has been private since de-listing in 2004, has investments in land and property, transport and logistics, low-carbon energy and other infrastructure. It has a focus on regeneration projects in the north of England.

It was founded in the early 1970s by Whittaker, a billionaire who has been described as one of the most influential business leaders in Greater Manchester and the northwest.

Peel said it believed that its offer "represents a compelling opportunity for Harworth's shareholders to realise full liquidity for their shareholding at fair value".

According to AJ Bell, the bid represents a 20 per cent discount to Harworth's last stated net asset value per share while the average discount to net asset value per share across the real estate sector is 24 per cent.

Peel asked shareholders to take into consideration several factors when weighing up the offer.

It said that "Harworth's cashflow profile is increasingly becoming less sustainable driven partly by Harworth's increasing administrative cost base and increasing net interest expense, which are significantly higher than its recurring rental income".

It also questioned the returns it was delivering and said its growth target was "highly unlikely to be achieved".

It also said the offer addressed the "structural valuation discount" to net asset value that Harworth had "faced for many years" and that its stock market listing provided "limited benefit".

"Harworth has not raised new equity in the last nine years, and [Peel] believes Harworth would not be able to raise new equity [effectively] today given its consistent discount," it added.

In 2025 Harworth reported revenue of £129.7 million and profit after tax of £9.5 million.

Google faces trial in £5bn class action

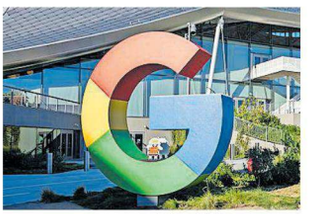
Chris Dorrell

A British court has certified a £5 billion class-action lawsuit against Google, allowing hundreds of thousands of British businesses to take the tech giant to trial.

The case, brought forward by Dr Or Brook, a competition law academic, accuses Google of abusing its dominant position in the search market to drive up prices for search advertising for almost 900,000 businesses and organisations in the UK. Google called the claim "speculative and opportunistic".

The claim alleges that Google had required device manufacturers to pre-install its search app and Chrome browser to access the Play Store. Google was also alleged to have offered financial incentives to device manufacturers to pre-install its search engine.

As a result of its strength in the search market, the claimants argued that "Google was able to charge supra-competitive prices for search advertising and reduce the value obtained from such advertising."



The company is accused of abusing its dominance in search advertising

After a hearing last month, the Competition Appeal Tribunal granted a so-called collective proceedings order on an opt-out basis. This means that businesses that were overcharged for Google ads will automatically be represented at trial. "These are not weak claims," Justice Meade said.

Google had argued that the case should only proceed on an opt-in basis, which would probably have dramatically decreased its potential liability. It argued that the claimants had not shown that it was impractical to proceed on an opt-in basis.

Meade said that those arguments reflected a "nit-picking" approach, with "almost nothing to be said in favour of opt-in". Although the ruling allows the case to proceed to a trial, it does not imply that Google broke the law.

A Google spokesman said: "This is a speculative and opportunistic case — and we will argue against it vigorously. Consumers and advertisers use Google because it is helpful, not because there are no alternatives."

Geradin Partners and KP Law, two law firms, are backing the claim, which is being funded by Burford Capital.

Nintendo revenues powered up by Trump tariffs refund

Simon Freeman

Nintendo's revenues gained a multi-million-dollar power-up from the refund of President Trump's tariffs.

The Japanese videogame maker's operating profit jumped more than 150 per cent to just over $900 million in the three months to June 30, despite a 9.5 per cent drop in total net sales.

Much of the increase was driven by a reduction in cost of sales relating to refunds of Trump's "liberation day" tariffs, which were ruled unlawful by the US Supreme Court in February. Nintendo produces most of its hardware in Asia, with major manufacturing operations in China and Vietnam, which were subject to rates of up to 46 per cent.

The company says it had mostly absorbed the extra costs since their introduction in April last year, but is facing a potential class action demanding that a portion of the refund is passed back to customers. "We recorded approximately $300 million as a reduction of cost of sales in connection with refunds of tariffs," it said. "The tariffs related to the refunds were primarily borne by the company rather than passed on to consumers through product prices."

Beyond the tariff impact, Nintendo said sales of its Switch 2 console, which was released last summer, "maintained strong sales momentum" totalling 3.8 million units. Analysts suggested the figure was buoyed by buyers getting ahead of international price rises, due to come in next month to counter the soaring price of memory chips.

Nintendo's Tokyo-listed shares were up 2.9 per cent yesterday.

Business

Loan notes failed investors but

Some lost everything buying slickly marketed products that have been branded Ponzi schemes, reports **James Hurley**

Thousands of people have lost life-changing sums in failed loan note investment schemes.

The operators of these schemes are being pursued by insolvency practitioners and, in one case, examined by criminal authorities. But there are also a collection of individuals and organisations who have got rich from this scandal that are, as it stands, facing few consequences.

This newspaper has established that in two examples of such schemes, 79th Group and Godwin Capital, it is estimated that third-party promoters made more than £100 million in commission. Both 79th and Godwin are alleged Ponzi scams, according to insolvency practitioners.

Ordinary investors are drawn in to loan note investments by slick marketing and smooth sales techniques. Assets supposedly underlying such schemes range from property developments to litigation funding, gold, whisky, art and cryptocurrency.

The combined value of investors' exposure to these high-risk, and sometimes allegedly fraudulent, loan notes is estimated to add up to several billion pounds.

This "epidemic", as one critic has called their rapid rise, is a source of growing alarm among UK regulators, insolvency practitioners and the banking industry, and is prompting calls for greater scrutiny of third-parties helping them to thrive.

The City of London Police has launched an criminal investigation into 79th Group over suspected "widespread fraud" and its operators have been bankrupted. The Times has learnt that about £70 million of its investors' money went to third-party promoters. Several individual consultants each made millions of pounds from promoting 79th.

According to records seen by The Times, one individual promoter alone allegedly made close to £4 million in commission. 79th's operators have denied wrongdoing.

Anne Chamberlain and her husband, both in their late-70s, are among those counting the cost of an encounter with what the Financial Conduct Authority has called the "enticing" marketing of such investments.

The retired Spain-based expats had saved more than £150,000 towards their future living and care costs. In July 2024, they invested this sum, their "entire life savings", into Godwin Capital.

Like 79th, Godwin told investors their money was secured against commercial property investments, while it claimed of having a track record of working with brands including Mc Donald's and Lidl. It collapsed last year and insolvency practitioners have alleged it was a £175 million Ponzi, an investment scam that repays investors with new backers' money. Investors are expected to recover only about 5p for every £1 they put in.

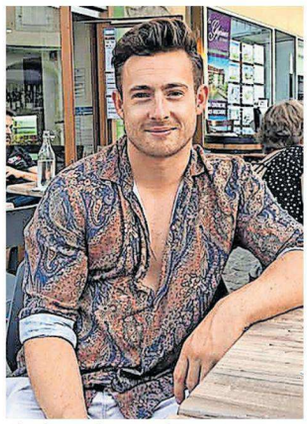
"It is devastating," says Chamberlain, who worked as a catering manager in England before her retirement. "It has destroyed our plans. We don't know what the future holds."

She claims she was sold the scheme by a promoter called Remy Hart, partner at a firm called Holborn Assets. She claims Hart convinced the couple to put their savings into a two-year Godwin loan note paying 12 per cent.

"My husband was against putting all our money in one product but Remy said the money was 100 per cent guaranteed, there was a charge over the assets and an FCA-regulated company was holding the security. We'd never put our savings into just one thing before but he convinced us. We put our trust in Holborn and Remy. It is devastating."

Godwin's investments are expected to realise only about £6 million, meaning investors are facing enormous losses, while it is understood an estimated £35 million went to third-party promoters in commission payments.

Hart is described on Holborn's website as being "committed to providing exceptional service and expertise to our clients" and his LinkedIn profile says his "favourite way to do business" is "on a golf course on the Costa del Sol". He did not respond to Chamberlain's allegations or a series of questions, including about how much commission he made from selling Godwin.



Charlie Hasberry and Remy Hart, below left, promoted 79th Group before its collapse. Below right: Adam Davis, founder of Capital 3PM

Holborn, a Dubai-based firm whose associates played a key role in helping to promote Godwin, has blamed a business called Capital 3PM for its involvement in the alleged scam, to which about 2,500 people are exposed.

Capital 3PM was a "distributor", acting as a bridge between Godwin and those who sold the notes to the public. It was paid a commission from loan note providers, and then split that with networks such as Holborn, which sold, or "introduced", the notes. Capital 3PM would also sometimes sell loan notes directly to investors.

A Capital 3PM document appears to show that Holborn advisers competed on a leaderboard to sell Godwin, with "incentives" including a "supercar tour through Tuscany, Italy" for the "top three" performers. Cars on offer for people who sold the most loan notes to drive on the "four-day, three-night" tour through "rolling hills, beautiful lakes and stunning vineyards" included a Mclaren 720s, which retails new for about £190,000, and a Lamborghini Huracán Performante Spyder, which costs more than £200,000. "Runner-up" incentives included Apple products.

Ryan Moore, whose social media describes him as an "award-winning financial adviser" based in Abu Dhabi "under Holborn Assets network", is listed as the top-seller of Godwin in the document, dated 2020. A Ryan Moore is recorded in a June 2020 online review claiming that he had invested his "own wealth" into Capital 3PM deals as well as "introducing many of my clients". Moore did not respond to invitations to comment.

In voice notes heard by this newspaper, Adam Davis, the founder and managing partner of Capital 3PM, appears to tell a promoter why Godwin is a good bet, stating it was "100 per cent asset-backed, 100 per cent secured".

He explains it has "never defaulted" and had made "tens of thousands of coupon payments". In the voice notes, which he says should be shared with investors, he says "the most common objective that we receive" is that it sounds "too good to be true". However, he said funds invested were "100 per cent protected" via a "debenture held by a security trustee" over funds in a Lloyds account.

"Should Godwin go bust all of the capital is secured therefore in the bank account of Godwin ... and secured by way of the debenture," he is heard to claim. "We're very bullish on the confidence and the security element of the product."

These statements proved to be inaccurate. Insolvency practitioners have established that no fixed charges were granted in favour of the trustee, investor funds were unsecured and Godwin had no assets beyond intercompany balances.

Capital 3PM folded shortly after Godwin's collapse and Davis could not be reached for comment. Davis has previously said in an interview that backing such "fixed-income" products could help him and clients "sleep well at night".

Lawsons Network, based in Switzerland, says it helps independent "advisers" sell investments including loan notes by providing "infrastructure, systems and operational support".

A Lawsons spreadsheet entitled "providers & gross commission rates at Lawsons Network" seen by The Times describes generous commission that consultants will receive for promoting loan notes.

They include 79th Group; Woodville, a recently collapsed £250 million litigation funding group; Alderley Group, a social housing investment scheme that went bust in June, and HJ Collection, a £120 million property scheme owned by Reece Mennie, whose other company, Hunter Jones, mis-sold investments, including to a 90-year-old woman.

Anne and Russell Chamberlain put all

Last week, the City regulator censured Equity for Growth (securities), the firm that used to provide Hunter Jones with regulatory cover to market loan notes. It said that it approved promotions by firms including Hunter Jones, which "failed to disclose very high commission fees"

High fuel costs clip Wizz Air's wings

Charlotte Bend

Wizz Air has swung to a quarterly loss in an "extremely volatile" period following the Middle East conflict which has sent jet fuel costs sharply higher.

The budget airline sank to a loss before income tax of €251.9 million in the three months to the end of June compared with a profit of €48 million in the same period a year ago. This was despite 21.1 million passengers flying with the carrier in the quarter, up 25.1 per cent against a year ago.

The FTSE 250-listed company said the loss largely reflected the fact that its fuel expenses jumped by 39 per cent compared with last year, to €610.5 million

Wizz previously said it took a €50 million hit from the Iran war after having to cancel flights to Tel Aviv in Israel and other routes to the Middle East and Cyprus in March. Looking ahead, the airline said it that had hedged 76 per cent of its full-year jet fuel needs.

While many flights have resumed, the company said it was reallocating flying from longer-haul Middle East routes to shorter European markets.

The results yesterday followed a shareholder revolt on Wednesday when 26 per cent of those who voted were against the company's pay report while 25 per cent were opposed to the re-election of Barry Eccleston, who also chairs the remuneration committee, as a director.

Jozsef Varadi, Wizz Air chief executive, said: "The industry has been extremely volatile over the June quarter due to conflict in the Middle East, elevated fuel prices, and changes in booking patterns.

"While we continue to see the build-up of forward bookings, the rest of the year is expected to present both industry challenges and strategic opportunities."

Varadi added that Wizz Air continued to recover from aircraft groundings mainly related to powder metal defects with Pratt & Whitney engines. The impact continues to lessen, with 27 aircraft grounded as of June 30, compared with 41 last year. The plan to return the affected fleet to service by the end of 2027 remains on track.

Net debt was recorded as €5.1 billion compared to €4.9 billion at March 31 after the delivery of ten aircraft.

Wizz Air said it would have five aircraft permanently in Spain to support the launch of 15 new domestic and three international routes from bases in Valencia, Madrid and Santiago de Compostela.

Wizz Air shares were down 3.23 per cent, or 37p, to £11.10 at the close yesterday.

App helping low-income staff ponders going public

Richard Tyler
Editor, Entrepreneurs Network

Stream, the employee benefits firm that provides four million low-income workers with cheaper financial services, is considering a stock market listing after lifting revenues 81 per cent to £66.8 million.

The loss-making company, which is understood to be valued at more than $1 billion, operates under a legally binding social charter to "do good" and supports 900,000 NHS staff to access wages early, save and borrow.

Stream said it planned to list "in the foreseeable future". Peter Briffett, co-founder and chief executive, said a listing was a natural next step after Stream had raised over £170 million in venture capital since its launch in 2018. "We are definitely going to have a public market listing. As a British business it makes sense for us to very much consider the London market," he said.

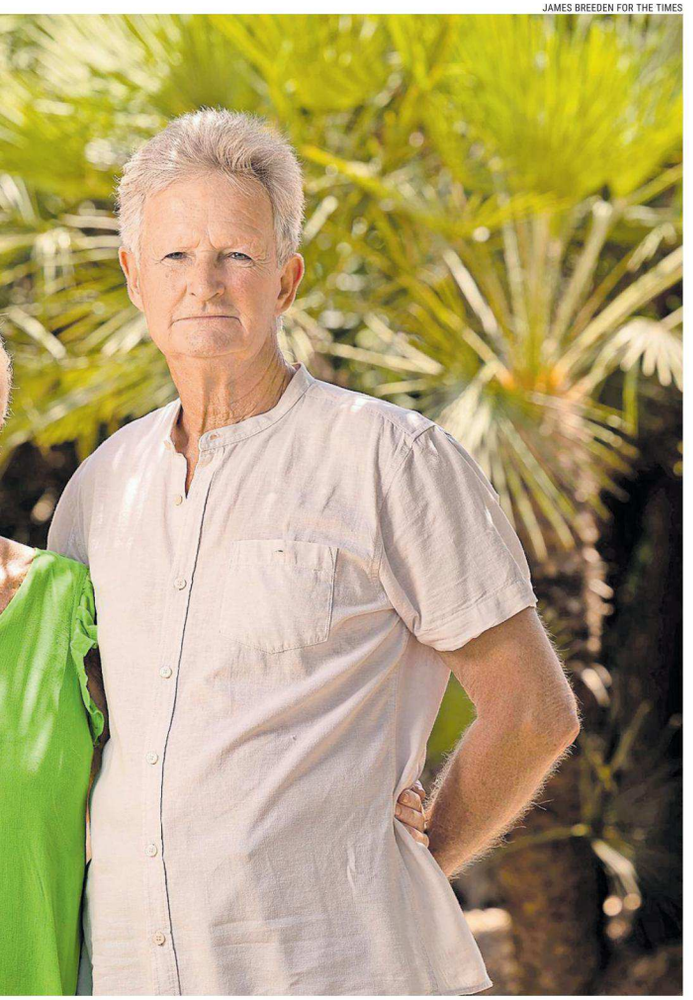
However, a final decision on the choice of stock exchange has not yet been made as the company's shareholders include major international financial institutions and it has recently expanded in the United States, where it now serves one million people at companies including the retailers Dollar General and Albertsons.

Briffett said the choice of listing was "a shareholder decision" and that Stream had "optionality" because of its success in the US. It has not appointed City bankers to advise on its initial public offering. "They are still courting us but those decisions will be made in the next weeks and months," he said.

The company makes its money from

promoters made £100m

JAMES BREEDEN FOR THE TIMES



their savings in Godwin Capital, whose salesmen included Ryan Moore, right

The Lawsons spreadsheet describes commissions of up to 15 per cent of what consultants convince people to invest. This is before any cut taken by Lawsons, third-party distributors such as Capital 3PM or the loan note provider itself.

Extremely high commissions passed to promoters in unregulated loan note schemes betray the impossible maths at their heart. Such payments can leave investors' capital drastically, and in many cases fatally, depleted before it has gone into any underlying investment.

In the case of Godwin, it is understood that insolvency practitioners have calculated that the scheme would have needed a return of at least 234 per cent — and perhaps as high as 400 per cent — to simply repay capital and interest.

While loan notes often rely on a regulatory loophole that allows the marketing of such schemes to people who self-certify as "sophisticated" investors, financial experts warn that no financially literate investor would think that such a high return on debt products was realistic. The commissions are allegedly often undisclosed.

Networks such as Lawsons and Holborn are unregulated and say they rely on distributors such as Capital 3PM to conduct due diligence on underlying investments.

Roy Thomas, a lawyer for victims of the 79th collapse, recalls attending a "horrendous" meeting in Spain where one introducer was said to have received "over £200,000 in commission from introducing over 35 victims to 79th". Many of the people he met were frail and Thomas believes many were vulnerable and unsophisticated. "It was heartbreaking as investors realised they might not get their money back," he said.

Martin Richardson, senior partner at Richardson Hartley Law, a firm that pursues recoveries from loan note schemes, said: "Lives are being ruined. It is leading to financial devastation for many, causes relationship breakups and leaves many people in a deep state of depression.

"We estimate that in the past few years, hundreds of millions of pounds have been paid out to introducers who have put their clients into schemes that went on to fail.

"It is not uncommon for us to see introducers recommend three, four or even five schemes that all go on to fail. When you compare the rate of commissions being paid to unregulated introducers and those who have to abide by regulatory rules the difference can be tenfold plus."

Andrew Stoneman, managing director of the Kroll restructuring practice, which is investigating the collapse of 79th Group, said: "These schemes prey on ordinary people, lured by slick marketing and promising unrealistic returns. Regulatory reform to crack down on the mis-selling should be considered."

Holborn did not answer a series of questions, including how much it and its consultants made from selling Godwin, In a statement, the firm said it did not wish to comment on "individual allegations" while insolvency work and civil litigation are in progress.

It said its role in Godwin was "limited to that of an introducing firm", adding: "Investors were introduced to Capital 3PM pursuant to a formal agreement. Holborn was neither the issuer nor the promoter of the Godwin investment and did not control the underlying assets, security arrangements or the deployment of investor funds."

It said Capital 3PM was "responsible for providing product information, marketing materials and the product-level due diligence upon which introducing firms were expected to rely" and that Holborn "conducted the level of review appropriate to its role" and inaccurate claims about Godwin "originated from information supplied by Capital 3PM". It had "no information" suggesting such claims were "false or fraudulent". It added that it "recognises the significant financial and personal impact" of Godwin's collapse.

Hunter Jones has said it has "learnt lessons" from past mistakes and that complying with the rules was "fundamental to how we run our business". The former operators of Godwin could not be reached.

or disclose that these fees would be deducted from investors' money. Equity for Growth has been shut down by the FCA over the issue.

The promotions were "unfair, unclear and misleading", the regulator said. Hunter Jones declined to comment.

Citywire has reported that brothers Charlie and Joseph Hasberry owned Lawsons Network. Charlie Hasberry, now director of Jura Capital, a "boutique introducer", was one of the key salesmen for 79th Group. Lawsons, Jura and Charlie Hasberry did not respond to questions or invitations to comment.

A conventional regulated financial adviser usually charges between 1 and 3 per cent of the amount invested and about 0.8 per cent a year for continuing advice, and there are strict restrictions on receiving commissions from providers of underlying investments.

Tax breaks 'essential' to revive UK oil and gas

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

Tax breaks are "essential" to revive the UK North Sea oil and gas industry, the boss of Harbour Energy has said, even as it enjoyed a surge in profits on the back of higher prices.

Harbour is the third biggest producer in the North Sea, which is in renewed focus after BP announced it was quitting the basin after more than 60 years.

The UK North Sea is subject to a 78 per cent effective tax rate thanks to the "energy profits levy", introduced as a windfall tax by the Conservatives after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and increased and extended under Labour.

Linda Cook, Harbour's chief executive, told analysts: "The North Sea continues to have a vital role and can play an even bigger role when it comes to UK energy security. It also means investment and jobs. The key to realising that is going to continue to be the fact that we need a more supportive fiscal framework. That's essential if projects are to compete for capital with companies that have opportunities outside the UK."

Harbour reported a 37 per cent jump in adjusted net profits for the first six months of the year, to $562 million, boosted by record production and higher prices stemming from the US war on Iran. Earnings before interest, taxation, exploration costs and other charges rose by 15 per cent to $4.5 billion. Shares jumped 11½p or 4.9 per cent to close at 243½p as it announced a $250 million share buyback.

Harbour started out as a UK North Sea-focused player with former Shell and Premier Oil assets but has expanded overseas through a string of acquisitions so that the UK now accounts for 29 per cent of its production. Its biggest presence is in Norway but it also has operations in the Americas and Asia.

Its production in the first half rose to the equivalent of 509,000 barrels of oil per day, up from 488,000 barrels a day a year earlier, boosted by the acquisition of LLOG, a Gulf of Mexico producer. It expects to produce 490,000 barrels per day on average for the full year, up from guidance of at least 480,000.

Andy Burnham, the prime minister, has said he will be "pragmatic" about the North Sea and is reviewing the energy profits levy. Meg O'Neill, the boss of BP, said this week that the UK industry was not able to compete with opportunities elsewhere in the world.

Cook said she was "encouraged" by the new government's comments. She added: "What BP have said makes sense. It's the same reason why Harbour has decreased investment in the UK in favour of acquisitions and investments elsewhere, such as the US."

Serica Energy, the FTSE 250 North Sea group, has reported a jump in profits as the US war on Iran boosted commodity prices. The company reported first-half earnings before interest, taxation, exploration costs and other charges of $301 million, up from $118 million a year earlier. Profit after tax swung to $6 million from a $43 million loss in the same period of 2025. Serica, which recently made its first international acquisition with a deal for Pharos Energy, said it that continued "to seek further opportunities to deliver shareholder value via M&A both in the UK and internationally".

employers such as Next and Asda paying to use its platform, as well as a £1.95 transaction fee it charges employees accessing their wages early, interest on loans and from brands paying to target discount offers at specific occupations, such as nurses or chefs.

In accounts to be filed at Companies House shortly, the company reported its pre-tax losses narrowing in 2025 to £18.5 million from £22.2 million previously. A source close to Stream said that it achieved unicorn status after a £67 million fundraising last autumn.

The business was set up by Briffett and Portman Wills to tackle the use of predatory payday lenders by working families with few savings. Briffett said the company's mission was to "impact 100 million people" in the long term.

In the UK, it has helped families typically earning less than £35,000 a year to save £100 million, Briffett said, by rounding down earnings and moving small, regular sums into savings accounts. Stream's loans are cheaper than others available to employees with little credit history, he added.

Directors face ban in filing crackdown

James Hurley

Directors who fail to file company documents on time are facing greater enforcement action from Companies House, including bans from running businesses for the worst offenders.

In the first six months of this year, 23 people were disqualified for a combined total of 70 years for "persistent or serious non-compliance" with their duties. The UK's corporate register also said it had prosecuted and fined 360 directors for filing offences in the first quarter of this year as it stepped up scrutiny of those who fail to file documents such as accounts and shareholder information on time.

Companies House did not provide equivalent figures from a year ago but it is understood that there has been a significant increase in its enforcement activity in this area, with an average of about 12 disqualifications a year in the past. It has also been successful in persuading courts to take the offences more seriously, and longer bans have been handed out.

Martin Swain, director of intelligence and law enforcement engagement at Companies House, said: "Limited liability encourages enterprise, giving businesses the confidence to start, invest and grow. In return, they are expected to be transparent and accountable. We encourage and support companies to comply with their legal obligations to file accounts and confirmation statements. Prosecution ensures that where there has been a serious breach of the law, individuals are held to account."

After years of criticism that it is too open to abuse, Companies House is in the midst of changes designed to clean up the register and help tackle economic crime.

From April 2028, two million small companies will be obliged to file information on their profits and losses for the first time, although after a backlash over the plans they will be able to opt to have the information hidden. The changes affect small and micro companies — businesses with up to 50 employees or revenues of up to £15 million.

The government has said the profit and loss statements would be available for review by "law enforcement and HMRC" to tackle "fraud, economic crime and tax evasion". About 60 per cent of the UK's £47 billion tax gap is attributed to underpayment by SMEs.

The implementation of separate measures which require new directors and beneficial owners of companies to verify their identity was followed by a drop in company registrations. The rules were introduced after longstanding concerns that the UK register was being abused to facilitate financial crime and money laundering.

Business

Trump has US Fed chief on speed dial for advice on war

Jack Barnett

President Trump frequently calls Kevin Warsh, the head of the US Federal Reserve, for information on how the war in the Middle East is affecting the American economy.

Trump tends to call the Fed chairman in bursts, sometimes several times a day, in a move that breaks from decades of convention aimed at keeping politics and monetary policy separate. The news was first reported by the Wall Street Journal, which cited people familiar with the matter.

In response to the article, Scott Bessent, the US treasury secretary, posted on X that the reporters were "stenographers posing as journalists... reporting Fed backroom gossip because they're incapable of performing real economic or monetary policy analysis without being spoon-fed".

Although the sources did not confirm whether the president had discussed interest rates with Warsh, they said that Trump sought advice on how the jump in global energy prices stemming from the Gulf conflict could impact US consumers.

He also wanted to know how the economy was coping with the rise of artificial intelligence.

Trump's regular communications with Warsh come after a fractious relationship with Jerome Powell, the previous Fed chairman.

Typically in posts on his Truth Social site, the president would call on Powell to slash interest rates to as low as 1 per cent, refer to him as a "numbskull" and "Too Late" Powell.

The strained relationship culminated in Powell disclosing that federal prosecutors had launched an investigation into him over testimony he gave to a Senate committee in relation to renovations to the Fed's headquarters.

The disclosure prompted the heads of the world's foremost central banks to come out in support of Powell, who was replaced by Warsh in May.

AL DRAGO/BLOOMBERG

Kevin Warsh was appointed by President Trump and succeeded Jerome Powell, below, as the US Fed chairman in May

Trump's approval ratings have taken a hit since the US-Israeli war with Iran ignited in February.

Petrol prices have topped the $4 a gallon mark owing to the rise in wholesale oil prices since fighting started.

Analysts claim that Trump will want to strike a peace deal with Tehran before the November midterms.Inflation in the US has gathered momentum in recent months and is well above the Fed's 2 per cent target at 3.5 per cent.

The central bank left rates unchanged at a range of 3.5 per cent to 3.75 per cent at its latest meeting in July.

A White House spokesperson told The Wall Street Journal: "President Trump has repeatedly stressed that he is giving chairman Warsh the space he needs to restore confidence and competence in Fed decision making."

According to sources, Trump often compliments the Fed chair on his looks after watching him on TV. There was a move towards transferring decisions on monetary policy from politicians to independent central bankers in the 1990s to avoid interest rates being set for political gain rather than for the good of the wider economy. The Bank of England was granted independence in 1997.

The move was hailed as a success following low levels of inflation over the past 25 years.

However, global prices have risen sharply in the wake of the pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the war in the Middle East, resulting in central banks facing accusations that they kept rates too low after the 2008 financial crisis and did not raise them fast enough when inflation crept up in late 2021.

Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK, has criticised the Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey and his decision making on rates and quantitative easing. Farage has previously suggested that he would look to replace Bailey if he became prime minister.

Liz Truss, the shortest-serving prime minister in British history, has frequently claimed that the Bank was part of an establishment coup to bring her down, despite her mini-budget triggering a crisis in UK financial markets.

OSB Group's margins feel squeeze from rival lenders

Ben Martin

A warning from OSB Group that fierce competition for deposits will squeeze its margins this year sparked a stock market sell-off that knocked more than £200 million from the value of the FTSE 250 bank.

Shares in OSB, one of Britain's biggest buy-to-let mortgage lenders, slid by 61p, or 10.7 per cent, to 508p yesterday after it cut its guidance for its net interest margin, the difference between what it charges for loans and pays for deposits, to a range of 2.15 per cent to 2.2 per cent. It had previously forecast that it would post a margin of about 2.25 per cent for 2026 and blamed "strong competition in the retail savings market and elevated retail funding costs so far this year" for the downgrade, adding that it had "made the conservative assumption that these pressures will not ease".

OSB also cut guidance for its expected return on tangible equity this year to about 12.5 per cent, from the "low teens" forecast it had given in March.

These cuts and the subsequent share price fall, which left OSB valued at £1.7 billion, are another blow to Andy Golding, the long-serving chief executive who is stepping down at the end of the month. Golding, 57, has spent the past two years trying to restore shareholder confidence after a profit warning in 2023 and margin forecast downgrades in 2024 caused investors to panic and sent its shares sharply lower.

He said yesterday that "markets are very sensitive to a net interest margin number in the short-term, I don't think that's the be-all and end-all. The medium-term outlook for this organisation is incredibly strong, it's just a bit of a bumpy market right now."

Golding, who will be succeeded by Enrique Alvarez Labiano, a Santander UK executive, said the market for deposits was "pretty hot" and that OSB's ability to compete had been hampered by an internal project to migrate savings accounts from a third-party servicer to a new platform, which meant "we are having periods where we haven't got products for sale".

OSB was created in 2019 when One-Savings Bank, run by Golding since 2012, acquired Charter Court Financial Services, and the group is behind brands including Kent Reliance and Precise Mortgages.

Its decision to lower its margin guidance was disclosed in its half-year results, in which OSB posted a 3 per cent year-on-year decline in pre-tax profits to £187.2 million for the six months to the end of June and slightly shy of the £191 million expected by City analysts.

CAB Payments counts cost of fighting off hostile takeover

Ben Martin

The private equity siege of CAB Payments Holdings has left the company footing a bill of more than £3 million and rising as it battles to fight off an unwanted takeover by its former owner.

London-listed CAB disclosed yesterday that it was spending millions of pounds on investment bankers and lawyers in its efforts to defend itself against Helios Investment Partners, the private equity house that is trying to buy CAB back with a lowball bid.

The cross-border payments business also announced that Ann Cairns, 69, the board chair who has been leading its fight against Helios, planned to stand down by the end of year. While a CAB spokesman said she was leaving to focus on "personal priorities", the timing of her exit is nevertheless likely to draw attention in the City.

Helios, the biggest shareholder with a 45 per cent stake, is effectively besieging the business. It went hostile with its bid in February, proposing to buy CAB for $1.15 (about 85p) a share, to value the company at £216 million.

While the board argued this was too low, Helios has backing for its bid from Bhairav Trivedi, a former boss of CAB who owns a 2.2 per cent stake, and another shareholder, meaning more than 52 per cent of its stock is behind the takeover plan.

Ann Cairns, chair of the cross-border payments business, is stepping down

This is despite the bid being significantly below the £851 million valuation put on CAB when Helios listed it at 335p a share in July 2023, a flotation that within months proved disastrous after CAB sounded a huge profit warning that caused its stock to tumble.

Helios is seeking permission from regulators, including the Bank of England, to take control of CAB before making a firm offer. The firm also used its stake to effectively block StoneX, a financial services company, from trying to buy CAB with a rival bid of 110p a share. StoneX walked away in May.

CAB said in first-half results yesterday it had booked £3.6 million in "non-underlying items" in the six months to end of June that related "primarily to advisory costs in relation to the unrecommended offer" from Helios.

However, pre-tax profits still jumped to £14.6 million from £3.1 million a year earlier, reflecting a turnaround steered by Neeraj Kapur, 60, who replaced Trivedi as chief executive in 2024.

CAB shares closed up 3p, or 3.9 per cent, at 80p.

John Ficenec **Tempus**
Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Mobile group's hopes rest on Africa

VODAFONE

Market cap £35.4bn | **Worldwide customers** 280m

Are we nearly there yet? Vodafone investors have been waiting over a quarter of a century for a turnaround in the telecom giant's fortunes and while the latest update offered a glimmer of hope, it is still difficult to make a compelling case for the shares.

The bright spot was Africa, where mobile phone use is spreading and people are paying more for the privilege. The young are also eschewing standard bank accounts and going straight to managing their finances on a mobile phone through M-Pesa. Service revenue for the African business, which contributes 21 per cent of the group total, was up 14.8 per cent in the three months ended May, the first quarter of the financial year.

The FTSE 100 company is confident about the outlook for Africa and paid €1.8 billion for an additional 20 per cent stake to take effective control of Safaricom, Kenya's largest mobile operator.

The problem is that the core of the business is incredibly tough. The largest region by far is Germany, responsible for 32 per cent of service revenue. Here performance was less spectacular, rising 2.2 per cent in the first quarter. Selling more services to businesses helped to offset losing mobile and broadband customers, and that halted last year's 6 per cent revenue fall.

The UK, responsible for 23 per cent of service revenue, is also sluggish with service revenue up just 0.6 per cent in the first quarter once you adjust for last year's merger with Three. Vodafone paid £4.3 billion for the remaining 49 per cent of VodafoneThree held by CK Hutchison to take full ownership.

The rest of Europe and Turkey grew and helped revenue for the group to go 9.7 per cent higher. Decent trading and flurry of deals meant management is confident they can hit the upper end of adjusted underlying profit guidance of €13 billion to €13.3 billion for the full year to the end of March. The problem is that Germany and the UK, which make up more than half of the business, are difficult. The amount the average person spent on mobiles in the UK, or average revenue per user, when adjusted for inflation, fell from £19 to £10 in the decade ended 2025, according to government research.

Increasingly, in a mobile contract we're paying more for the phone and less for network access, making data more of a commodity. Painful if you own the network and have to cover the £11 billion bill agreed with regulator Ofcom to improve 5G service levels as part of the Three deal. While 2G and 3G, launched in 1991 and 2001 respectively, have begun to be switched off, 5G was launched in 2019, meaning 6G is on the horizon for 2030.

In a world of harsh pricing, big spending, high debt levels and a return on capital of 6.6 per cent at the end of March, down from 7 per cent, where does the shareholder sit? The answer is rather uncomfortably on that 26-year journey of creating a European telecoms colossus. Against a backdrop of fierce competition, squeezed household finances and rapidly changing technology it is difficult to see how that will change. True, a fifth of the business in Africa is motoring on nicely, but can that pull the whole group along?

The shares have gained almost 40 per cent during the past 12 months as the restructuring under its chief executive, Margherita Della Valle, begins to deliver. The Spanish and Italian operations are gone along with a Dutch joint venture and mobile masts business, with proceeds reducing net debt to €25.4 billion for the year ended March, from €41.6 billion four years earlier.

It has been a sorry time for UK investors, as shares have been going sideways for the past five years and have halved in value over the past decade. The dividend increased 2.5 per cent to 4.61 euro cents, or 3.91p, this year, giving a yield of 3.5 per cent. But that's cold comfort for those who were planning a retirement on the 15 euro cents paid back in 2019.

Xavier Niel, the French entrepreneur and shareholder of Le Monde, has clearly seen something he likes, acquiring a stake of 16 per cent. But with new low-cost providers such as Digi from Romania and Lidl expected to launch a mobile service, any gains come with too much risk.

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WHY Restructuring has shown progress but one quarter isn't enough to convince just yet

Signal strength

	Revenue	Pre-tax profit
2022	€45.6bn	€4.1bn
2023	€45.7bn	€12.8bn
2024	€36.7bn	€1.6bn
2025	€37.4bn	€−1.5bn
2026	€40.5bn	€1.9bn

FTSE 250 pushes higher despite PZ Cussons fall

MARKET REPORT

It says something for the robustness of the FTSE 250 that it withstood a sharpish drop in the shares of **PZ Cussons** and still managed a second consecutive record close (Robert Miller writes).

It was unfortunate, though, for investors in the Imperial Leather maker as the company reported that revenues totalled £541 million for the year to the end of May, up 5.8 per cent compared with the previous year while pre-tax profit rose 22 per cent to £50 million.

And, at a time when many companies are cutting back on promotional spending, PZ Cussons actually raised its marketing budget by £3.5 million. It also promoted brand-building partnerships such as the use of The Gruffalo and Zog animated characters and celebrity ambassador Spencer Matthews.

Investors, however, still baled out leaving the shares down 6p, or 5.6 per cent, to 102½p but then there was likely to have been a bit of profit-taking too as the stock has risen 38.5 per cent since the start of the year.

The FTSE 250 closed up 62.79 points at 24,695.42, a fresh high following its mid-week record. It was helped by outstanding gains from the table-topping **WPP**, up 87¾p, or 28.6 per cent, at 395p after the ad agency's half-year results showed signs of improvement, followed by **Harworth Group**, 34½p, or 24 per cent, higher at 178p, following an offer from Peel Group of close to £583 million to acquire the land and property regeneration company and take it private.

The FTSE 100, however, snapped a two-day winning streak to close down 20.41 points at 10,867.89. **Tritax Big Box Reit** shares suffered the biggest fall, down 7¼p, or 4.2 per cent, to 164½p.

The real estate investment trust that specialises in developing logistics and data centres said it had successfully raised about £350 million through an equity issue of new ordinary shares at 164p, with net proceeds intended for its data centre development pipeline.

Falls on London's main index were cushioned by gains from the energy companies as oil prices rose sharply after Iran-aligned Houthis said they attacked "Saudi deployments" in Yemen, ramping up concerns about Red Sea shipping. **BP** was up 4¾p, or 0.9 per cent, at 519¾p and **Shell** was 34½p, or 1.1 per cent, higher at £33.15 as Brent crude, the global benchmark, gained 4.2 per cent to $82.78 a barrel.

Wall Street report

Indices retreated after a set of mixed company earnings. Honeywell Aerospace fell 23.2 per cent after failing to match forecasts, and Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 3.8 per cent to $82.49 a barrel after the latest developments in talks to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The Dow Jones industrial average fell back from a midweek record by 464.02 points or 0.9 per cent to 53,885.10 as the Nasdaq shed 15.09 points or 0.1 per cent, to 26348.35. The S&P 500 slid 13.59 points or 0.2 per cent, to 7,709.96.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Diageo	5.6%
Admiral Group	5.2%
Vodafone Group	4.3%
Metlen Energy & Metals	3.4%
Persimmon	2.9%
Compass Group	-2.1%
Melrose Industries	-2.8%
IG Group	-2.8%
Relx	-4.1%
Tritax Big Box Reit	-4.2%

VICKI COUCHMAN FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES

Spencer Matthews, with wife Vogue Williams, is an ambassador for PZ Cussons

NEWS IN BRIEF

Admiral 'in right place'

The boss of Admiral has insisted that the motor insurer is "well-positioned" despite posting a fall in first-half pre-tax profits to £429.2 million from £521 million a year earlier.

Profits at the FTSE 100 company's core UK car insurance division were down 18 per cent year-on-year "as a result of lower earned premiums following rate reductions" a year ago, Admiral said yesterday.

However, Milena Mondini de Focatiis, its chief executive, said the insurer was now set to benefit because it has this year "increased rates earlier than the market", with prices for car cover at Admiral up by mid to high single digits.

She suggested that other motor insurers were likely to follow suit and lift premiums because "we tend to be the first ones to move, in both directions".

It comes after EY, the professional services group, forecast last month that premiums for car cover will rise by 4 per cent this year and then jump by 12 per cent in 2027 as insurers across the industry lift prices to offset the increasing cost of handling claims.

Overall group turnover at Admiral was flat at £3.1 billion in the six months to the end of June. It cuts its interim dividend to 70½p a share, from 115p a year earlier.

The shares closed up 194p, or 5.2 per cent, at £39 in London yesterday.

Equity fund exodus grows

Equity fund outflows picked up in July as the transition to a new prime minister added uncertainty over the direction of economic policy and taxation, according to the latest Fund Flow index from Calastone, the global funds network. UK investors took out a net £1.61 billion, the highest level of selling since October and November 2025 in the run up to the autumn budget. Last month was the fifth worst month for equity funds on Calastone's 11-year record. The 12-month run rate of outflows has now reached a record £13.9 billion. Multi-asset funds saw their first outflows, £463 million, since October 2022.

Spire offer extended again

Spire Healthcare said yesterday that the deadline for Toscafund Asset Management to make a formal takeover offer for the private hospital operator had been extended for a fourth time, to August 12. Toscafund tabled its 250p per share proposal on May 14, a 66 per cent premium to Spire's closing price the previous day, valuing the company at about £1 billion. A successful deal would give Toscafund, already Spire's second-largest shareholder, control of Britain's largest provider of hip and knee operations, at a time when record NHS waiting lists have fuelled demand for private healthcare.

Serco boosts buyback

Serco Group increased its share buyback programme yesterday as it reported a jump in first-half profit and revenue, after a particularly strong performance from the defence arm. The company, which also lifted the interim dividend 10 per cent to 1.60p a share, said the buyback would increase to £150 million for the year from £75 million. Revenue in the six months was up 4 per cent at £2.5 billion, with the defence business contributing organic growth of 10 per cent. Pre-tax profit rose to £121.5 million from £112.1 million a year ago. The shares closed up 17½p, or 7.2 per cent, at 260p.

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B'HAM GT. BARR, B43 6NR	0121 358 7977	COLCHESTER, CO1 1RE	01206 762831	GLASGOW, G4 9EJ	0141 332 9231	LONDON EDMTON, N18 0ZQ	0208 803 0861	PLYMOUTH, PL4 9HY	01752 254050	SWINDON, SN1 3AW	01793 491717
B'HAM HAY MILLS, B25 8DA	0121 771 3433	COVENTRY, CV1 1HT	02476 224227	GLOUCESTER, GL1 4NY	01452 417948	LONDON LEYTON, E10 7EB	0208 558 8284	POOLE, BH14 9HT	01202 717913	TWICKENHAM, TW1 4AW	0208 892 9117
BOLTON, BL3 6RD	01204 365799	CROYDON, CR2 6EU	0208 763 0640	GRIMSBY, DN32 9BD	01472 354435	LUTON, LU4 8JS	01582 728063	PORTSMOUTH, PO3 5EF	02392 654777	WARRINGTON, WA2 8JP	01925 630937
BRADFORD, BD1 3BN	01274 390962	DARLINGTON, DL1 1RB	01325 380841	HULL, HU9 1EG	01482 223161	MAIDSTONE, ME15 6HE	01622 769572	PRESTON, PR2 6BU	01772 703263	WIGAN, WN5 9AU	01942 323785
BRISTOL, BS5 9JJ	0117 935 1060	DEAL KENT, CT14 6BQ	01304 373434	ILFORD, IG2 7HU	0208 518 4286	MC OPENSHAW, M11 1AA	0161 223 8376	SHEFFIELD, S2 4HJ	0114 258 0831	WOLVERHAMPTON, WV4 6EL	01902 494186
BURTON, DE14 3QZ	01283 564708	DERBY, DE1 2ED	01332 290931	IPSWICH, IP1 1UZ	01473 221253	MANSFIELD, NG19 7AR	01623 622160	SIDCUP, DA15 9LU	0208 3042069	WORCESTER, WR1 1JZ	01905 723451
CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3HL	01223 322675	DONCASTER, DN2 4NY	01302 245999	LEEDS, LS4 2AS	0113 231 0400	MIDDLESBROUGH, TS17 6BZ	01642 677881	SOUTHAMPTON, SO17 3SP	02380 557788		
CARDIFF, CF24 3DN	02920 465424	DUNDEE, DD1 3ET	01382 225140	LEICESTER, LE4 6PN	0116 261 0688	NORWICH, NR2 4LZ	01603 766402	SOUTHEND, SS9 3JJ	01702 483742		
CARLISLE, CA1 2LG	01228 591666	EDINBURGH, EH8 7BR	0131 659 5919	LINCOLN, LN5 8HG	01522 543036	NORTHAMPTON, NN5 5JW	01604 267840	STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST1 5EH	01782 287321		
CHELTENHAM, GL52 2EH	01242 514402	EXETER, EX2 8QG	01392 256744	LIVERPOOL, L3 5NF	0151 709 4484	NOTTINGHAM, NG1 1GN	0115 956 1811	SUNDERLAND, SR2 9QF	0191 510 8773		

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ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	130.66		-0.08	8.07
UK Equity A ‡	401.5		+2.19	3.93
UK Growth ‡	10418.39		+48.89	2.22

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS
0800 092 2051

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	379.57		-0.12	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	213.45		-0.07	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	227.06		-0.97	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	68.09		+0.10	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	818		+3.75	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	313.53		+1.44	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	91.9		-0.02	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	902.83		+4.96	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	688.45		-0.68	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4283.7		+10.84	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	93.85		-0.13	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.6		-0.02	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.72		...	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	116.4		-0.02	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.58		-0.01	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1354.45		+11.03	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2360.42		+12.04	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1112.46		+4.97	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3298		+35.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2166		+9.00	1.15
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	329.8		+2.00	0.38
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	239.7		+1.20	1.15

AXA FUND MANAGERS
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	299.1		+0.67	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1041		+0.77	1.48
UK Growth ‡@	887.1		+0.76	1.71
UK Income ‡@	260.8		+0.38	3.92

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT
Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5663.32		+149.64	0.60

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083

Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1619		+8	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	600.3		+4	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	403.3		-0.3	...
Strategic Bd ‡	228.9		+0.1	3.90

EDENTREE INV MGMT
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡@	499.3		+1.30	1.77
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡@	461		-1.60	0.55
Sust Mgd Income ‡@	142.6		+0.20	4.72
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	85.47		...	4.98
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡@	257.5		+0.30	1.63
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡@	329.1		+1.30	1.42

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2950		...	...
American ‡	8051		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	744.4		...	0.48
European ‡	4447		...	0.76
Global Focus ‡	3697		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.37		...	6.58
Global Special Sits ‡	8958		...	...
Japan ‡	989.8		...	0.34
Moneybldr Bal ‡	49.1		...	0.60
Moneybldr Inc ‡	28.33		...	5.28
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡	203.15		...	2.47
Special Sits ‡	7496		...	1.65
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	107.1		...	1.41

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS
01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.49		...	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	216.2		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	109.1		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	121.1		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1638		-5	0.77
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1870		+7	2.27
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1084		+5	2.31
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	443.8		+1.2	2.48
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	180.1		+0.4	2.63
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	410.1		+2.0	2.87
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	222.4		+1.1	2.85
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1117		+8	2.64
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	502.3		+3.6	2.78
Japan Ind Acc ‡	235.2		+0.1	1.44
Japan Ind Inc ‡	170.6		+0.1	1.47
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1038		-20	1.59
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	587.6		-10.9	1.62

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	312.9		+0.1	4.20
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	403.6		+3.3	3.30
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡	@226.3		+1.8	2.97
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡	@87.72		+0.69	3.03

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1261		-4	0.76

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677

Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121

Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	232.6		...	4.00
High Income Dis ‡	435.86		...	3.13
Income & Growth Dis ‡	508.72		...	3.08
Income Inc ‡	1681.05		...	2.84
Money Acc ‡	107.8		...	3.62
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.5		...	5.78
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1404.16		...	1.46
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1379.63		...	1.40

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900

OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	872.85		-2.58	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	472.35		+0.25	2.61
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	270.17		+0.25	2.48
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	330.83		+0.14	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	121.76		+0.12	0.95
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	377.13		-0.11	3.78
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.91		-0.02	5.19
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	144.55		+0.11	5.96
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	66.96		+0.05	7.66
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	289.43		-3.0	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	226.8		-14.99	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	304.64		-0.49	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	404.5		+0.34	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2124.49		+2.3	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	533.17		+31.04	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	532.75		+4.57	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	408.71		+3.5	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2751.12		+2.15	1.03
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	946.14		+0.74	1.04

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)
JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Ding:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	114.1		...	4.40
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	97.38		...	5.40
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	359.8		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.4		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1325		-17	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	299.3		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3275		+24	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.23		...	6.10
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6574		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	89.06		+0.04	2.40
Global Tech A Acc ‡	7083		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	180.0389		...	2.20
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	187.1		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	338.2		-0.7	1.70
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	162.9		...	2.70
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	233.4		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	230.7		...	4.40
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.71		...	4.40
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.72		...	5.80
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	206.8		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	202		+1.3	1.30
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	3045		-13	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	713.2000		+4.3000	2.51

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	125.13		-0.1026	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	601.88		+0.6331	0.71
European ‡	4005.7		+0.6382	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1369.25		+1.2911	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	428.33		+0.2822	3.39
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	348.12		+0.7610	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	835.43		+0.2878	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	471.37		+0.2317	3.47
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	613.93		+0.7335	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	297.88		+0.6438	1.75
UK Growth ‡	286.97		+0.7637	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1030.41		+0.8056	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	820.3000		+580.0000	190.00
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	489.9000		+350.0000	200.00
Fixed Int Acc ‡	150.8000		...	460.00
Fixed Int Dist ‡	62.3300		...	460.00
Global Health ‡	122.7		+0.2	1.00
Glob Tech Acc ‡	238.2		-3.6	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.1000		+10.0000	580.00
Japan Ind Acc ‡	112.9000		...	130.00
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	409.5000		-680.0000	140.00
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	542.1000		+390.0000	250.00
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	234.7000		+170.0000	250.00
US Ind Acc ‡	1428		-11	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	473.7000		+180.0000	90.00

M&G SECURITIES
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1909.12		+0.7355501852	5.03
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14228.9		...	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1641.64		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1749.85		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3827.11		...	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1542.9		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1510.55		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1552.38		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1537.57		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1568.73		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.97		...	4.74
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.31		...	4.78
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1384.51		...	4.69
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3067.08		...	4.59
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2410.74		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1444.59		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2538.36		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1495.72		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	245.0		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	664.2		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	318.9		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1375.2000	1451.4000	...	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	831.35		+0.3585311089	5.07
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	67.31		-0.0742280285	4.37
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.77		...	6.25
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	101.73		-0.3233392122	1.56
Index Trckr Inc ‡	105.27		+0.6694080052	2.99
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.36		...	4.25
UK Select A Inc ‡	3305.96		+0.5960984308	2.65

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.93		-0.0606980273	5.00
Dividend Inc ‡	66.95		+0.7524454477	5.34
Recovery A Inc ‡	143.01		+1.1959675347	2.84
Sml Cos Inc ‡	367.33		+0.7321088883	2.79

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	162.23		-0.0123266564	3.90

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.22		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	297.6		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	720.4		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	324.1		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	483.1		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1105.2		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1342		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	746.8		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962

The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)

Class A Shares

Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1106.39		...	4.31
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1742.97		...	4.28
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1169.7		...	4.40

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS
0845 300 2244

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	605.4		-2.80	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	275.5		-1.30	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	331.5		+1.50	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	108.7		+0.50	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	474.5		-0.40	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	299.5		+1.50	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.58		+0.36	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	562.2		+0.50	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	152.2		+0.20	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	229.3		+0.10	4.50
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.36		+0.04	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	136.3		+0.20	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	670.7		-3.10	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	274.0		-1.20	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	133.1		+0.20	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003

Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.75		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.26		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.90		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	296.80		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	202.5		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	266.90		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	185.70		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	48.07		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	527.7		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	258.50		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	823.10		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	187.07		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	158.32		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	133.61		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	105.67		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	499.92		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	437.4		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	493.78		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	320.08		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0684000

Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.5063		+1.74	4.63
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	102.6288		+75.36	2.71
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	55.1078		+1.04	4.26
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	55.0084		+0.99	3.94
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.7745		+1.03	4.15
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	42.0506		+1.31	3.80
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	121.1692		+109.05	3.46
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡	1141887		+93.13	3.17
Threadneedle UK Instl Rtl ‡	251.4318		+157.35	1.33
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	91.0042		+89.49	2.97
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	168.7087		+185.7	1.31
Threadneedle U Smaller Comp Rtl Inc ‡	407.5178		+402.54	0.38

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis	1015	1015	...	1.21

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

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British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 50	64.52	-.35	0.77	2.50
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 52	57.69	-.33	0.43	2.49
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.36	-.07	0.13	0.45
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.27	-.07	0.13	0.79
98.49	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.66	-.04	0.13	1.02
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.70	-.23	0.15	1.87
82.05	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.64	-.22	0.16	2.16
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	73.03	-.31	0.17	2.25
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	67.33	-.27	0.19	2.41
71.23	62.87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.75	-.34	0.20	2.47
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	60.11	-.34	0.21	2.49
60.61	50.05	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	50.94	-.38	0.25	2.42
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	49.95	-.43	0.25	2.39
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	44.72	-.48	0.28	2.25
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	43.67	-.43	0.29	2.20
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	45.07	-.55	0.28	1.91
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 34	93.97	-.16	0.80	1.59
79.12	70.87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 47	71.76	-.38	1.05	2.46
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 62	52.77	-.45	0.71	2.34
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 40	81.41	-.25	0.77	2.21
84.28	76.46	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 42	77.16	-.28	0.81	2.32
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.10	-.10	1.24	0.39
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	99.81	-.12	1.25	1.28
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	75.24	-.52	1.66	2.47
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	74.79	-.41	1.67	2.46
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ¼% 35	94.76	-.22	1.19	1.75
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 ¼% 37	91.43	-.21	1.23	1.98
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¼% 38	96.74	-.26	1.81	2.06
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	89.72	-.41	2.09	2.46
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.20	-.48	0.83	1.72
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 ½% 30	341.17	-.45	1.21	0.91

Longs (Over 15 Years)

26.99	22.31	Tr 0 ½% 61	23.13	-.21	2.16	5.40
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 ¼% 51	56.57	-.39	0.22	2.50
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 ¾% 50	34.15	-.21	1.83	5.65
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 ½% 53	42.41	-.23	3.54	5.71
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	41.07	-.24	3.04	5.70
33.04	27.53	Tr 1 ¼% 72	28.34	-.27	3.97	5.23
48.44	41.88	Tr 1 ¾% 57	43.18	-.29	4.05	5.66
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 ¾% 54	43.25	-.26	3.76	5.69
41.45	35.65	Tr 1 ¾% 71	36.67	-.30	4.43	5.36
57.14	49.76	Tr 2 ½% 65	51.28	-.30	4.88	5.58
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 ½% 68	66.60	-.37	5.26	5.57
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	74.19	-.37	5.05	5.66
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	73.36	-.34	5.11	5.69
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	79.09	-.38	5.32	5.66
83.52	73.44	Tr 4% 60	75.48	-.40	5.30	5.64

Mediums (5-15 Years)

83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ⅛% 31	81.69	-.14	0.31	4.38
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.91	-.13	0.44	4.34
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	69.33	-.21	0.90	4.88
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	77.49	-.19	1.13	4.69
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	44.41	-.26	1.97	5.60
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 ¼% 47	49.48	-.30	3.03	5.64
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	57.69	-.27	2.17	5.35
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ¼% 39	63.01	-.26	1.79	5.19
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	72.01	-.26	2.43	5.08
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	50.72	-.31	3.45	5.65
85.07	81.01	Tr 1½ 32	83.00	-.17	1.20	4.54
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 ¼% 45	76.53	-.32	4.57	5.55
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	92.35	-.20	3.52	4.63
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	74.71	-.32	4.35	5.53
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	88.00	-.30	4.26	5.15
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ¼% 34	98.17	-.27	4.58	4.78
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 35	97.52	-.27	4.61	4.86
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ¼% 42	89.99	-.34	5.00	5.43
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	98.63	-.20	4.31	4.52
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	96.48	-.26	4.40	4.79
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	94.72	-.26	4.49	4.95
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	90.75	-.32	4.68	5.23
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	89.45	-.33	4.75	5.31
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	83.97	-.36	5.06	5.58
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	82.29	-.37	5.16	5.62
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ¾% 31	98.63	-.16	4.18	4.46
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ¾% 33	97.10	-.22	4.25	4.64
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 ¾% 30	101.53	-.16	4.68	4.36
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	98.75	-.28	4.81	4.92
102.00	93.64	Tr 4 ¾% 38	96.17	-.32	4.94	5.17
102.58	98

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86¾	33½	Aston Martin Lag	34½	–	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**	251¾	– 2¼	5.8	11.6
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0⅝		...	-3.4
3958	2624	**Admiral**	3900	+ 194	3.7	15.8
662½	414½	AJ Bell	599½	– 6½	2.5	23.3
28761⅛	22372½	AON Corp‡	26683	– 4¾	0.9	...
1130	799	Arbuthnot♦	837½	+ 7½	6.6	7.7
276½	145½	Ashmore Group	219½	+ 2¾	7.7	18.0
2126½	1487½	Australia & NZ	1992⅛	+ 2⅛	5.7	19.6
714	590⅝	**Aviva**	710½	+ 9	5.5	26.4
1121⅞	653	Banco Santander	1100	+ 4	1.5	14.1
554⅛	352⅞	**Barclays**‡	520	– 7½	2.2	11.9
17½	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4¼		...	-2.2
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	676		5.4	5.1
363⅛	212	Bridgepoint Grp	337⅛	– 4¼	2.8	67.5
352	264⅛	Chesnara	342		6.6	-67.7
492	349	City of London Grp	486	– 6	6.8	16.3
563½	318½	Close Bros	432⅜	– 3⅜	...	-6.5
753	203	CMC Markets‡	693	– 4	2.0	25.2
2957⅞	2057	Deutsche Bank	2806¾	– 9⅜	3.1	10.4
93	74¼	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	74¼	+ ¼	0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2210	Georgia Capital	4295	– 35	...	2.7
57	43¼	Hansard Global	51		8.7	39.2
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223		4.5	7.7
1904	1257½	**Hiscox**	1811	+ 20	2.2	13.5
1610	927½	**HSBC**	1521¼	+ 10⅝	3.7	16.9
1956	1016	**IG Group**	1312	– 38	3.2	9.0
204	90½	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	112½	– 2⅜	8.9	7.1
2340	1424½	**ICG**	2028	– 20	4.3	12.2
145⅞	115½	Intl Public P'ship	144	– ⅝	6.1	-13.4
690	499⅛	**Investec**	672	– 3½	5.7	8.7
76	60	Investment Co	75		...	...
73¼	48	IP Group	69⅜	+ ¾	1.8	9.6
27	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	8		43.8	2.5
214½	113⅛	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	162¼	– 2	3.7	8.4
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	593½		2.8	6.6
312	217¼	**Legal & General**	312	+ 6¼	7.0	31.2
12170	6905	**Lion Finance Group**‡	12170	+ 150	3.0	8.5
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt‡	303	– 3	6.3	19.7
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	37⅜	+ ⅛	8.4	16.8
117⅞	77⅛	**Lloyds Banking**‡	114¼	– 2⅛	3.5	16.4
22	14	LMS Capital	15½		25.7	...
10165	6684	**London Stock Exchange**	8750	+ 122	1.8	36.7
366½	247	**M&G**	364½	– ¼	5.6	28.9
327¼	154¼	Man Group‡	312	– 4	4.1	27.3
39½	20	Manx Financial Grp♦	24		2.1	4.4
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	4⅛	– ⅜	...	-15.3
185⅝	98¼	Metro Bank	173¾	– 4¼	...	22.3
2621½	1864½	National Australia	2232⅜	+ 6	4.0	19.3
726	500¼	**NatWest Group**	711¾	– 2	4.9	13.3
842½	438½	PayPoint	602½	– 4½	6.6	10.2
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1027	+ 2	1.9	9.0
1½	0⅞	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅝		...	-1.9
209	150¼	Quilter	196	– 6⅞	3.3	22.0
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1704	+ 12	5.9	15.8
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	322		...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1952½	– 7½	5.9	10.0
3	0⅛	Sancus Lending♦	1⅜		...	7.2
59⅛	42½	Schroder REIT	44⅜		8.0	...
599½	358⅛	**Schroders**‡	584½	– 5	3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place**‡	1117½	– 18	1.6	11.2
2278	1285	**Standard Chart'd**‡	2195	– 17	2.3	15.1
941	615	**Standard Life**	934	+ 5	5.9	-198.3
6347½	4186	Sun Life Canada	6082½	+ 11¾	3.3	...
6½	2¼	Tavistock Invs♦	3⅛		3.2	2.6
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp	4890	+ 32	3.3	6.8
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1⅜		...	-1.6
60	40½	Time Finance♦	51½	+ ½	...	8.1
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0⅛		...	-1.6
4	1½	Truetide♦	3⅛		...	-5.6
132	77½	Vanquis Banking Gp	81	– ¼	...	25.3
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2110		...	11.2
7239½	5453½	Wells Fargo	6540¾	– 74⅞	2.3	...
2275½	1627¾	Westpac Bkg Corp	2014⅞	– 2⅝	4.0	19.2
31½	23	Worsley Investors	28½		...	...
57550	49947½	Zurich Insurance	53987¼	– 184.7¼	5.1	18.4

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
380	181	Alumasc♦	217½	– 5	5.1	8.4
6⅝	4½	Aseana Properties	4⅞		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1½		...	-150.0
900	541	Balfour Beatty	878½	– 1	1.6	16.7
410¼	235½	**Barratt Redrow**	319½	+ 4⅜	5.3	23.5
2890	1715	Bellway	2098	+ 14	3.4	15.8
4442	2796	Berkeley	3592	+ 8	...	10.8
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	907	– 2½	5.2	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	420	+ 10	2.6	40.4
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	154		5.1	8.8
383½	271½	Breedon	345½	+ 1½	4.4	14.3
451½	318¼	**British Land**	441¾	– 6¼	5.2	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469½	Derwent London	2054	– 58	4.0	...
5½	4¼	DCI Advisors♦	4⅝		...	-2.7
19½	11	First Property♦	12½		2.0	6.9
75	29	Fletcher King♦	32½	– 1	6.9	22.0
62	31½	Foxtons Group‡	36⅝	– ⅜	3.2	8.5
632	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	621	+ 8	3.2	18.4
401⅜	241	Genuit Group	302⅝	+ 5⅜	4.3	16.6
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	276		4.0	10.2
1043½	788½	Grafton Grp Units	1029⅝	+ ⅜	3.7	14.7
213	149½	Grainger	174	– ¼	4.8	6.4
377	270	Great Portland Est	356	– 3	2.3	0.0
391½	263½	Hammerson	375¼	– 2½	4.9	...
191	116½	Harworth Group	178	+ 3⅜	1.0	61.4
400	225	Heath (Samuel)♦	255		5.1	31.9
241½	180⅝	Helical	203	+ 3	1.3	42.0
159¾	87⅝	Ibstock	91½	– 2	2.2	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	125		7.1	12.9
3518	1238	Keller	3080		2.6	15.2
7191½	6913½	Kingspan Group	7090⅞		0.7	22.4
726	522½	**Land Securities**	713	– 9	5.8	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**	195½	– 2¼	6.4	...
25⅝	4¾	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6⅛		...	-0.3
209½	124	Marshalls	175	+ ¾	3.8	30.7
108¾	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	75	– 3½	6.1	18.7
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4468	+ 4	3.6	12.0
10200	8350	Mountview Estates‡	8800		6.0	16.9
85	65¼	NewRiver REIT‡	81⅜	– ¼	8.2	...
234	160	Palace Capital	175	– 4	8.6	38.9
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1155½	+ 32½	5.2	12.9
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅛	Primary Health Props‡	95⅝		7.6	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	30⅞	+ ¼	4.9	-61.8
849½	578¾	Safestore‡	628½	– 9	4.9	...
1126	791½	Savills	976		3.5	18.8
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅛	603	**Segro**‡	962	– 9¾	3.3	...
162¾	124½	Shaftesbury Capital	144⅞	– 1½	3.0	7.7
13½	6¾	SIG	8½	– ¼	...	-1.5
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	131¾	+ 2	...	18.1
113	86¼	Sirius Real Estate	101¾	+ ¼	5.4	7.8
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23¼	15⅝	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.6
116⅞	74½	Taylor Wimpey	84	+ 1¼	4.9	30.0
140	104	Town Centre	130	– 3	3.8	...
723½	493¾	Travis Perkins	663	– 3½	1.7	-8.0
175	132¼	**Tritax Big Box**	164½	– 7¼	5.0	...
760½	442¼	Unite Group	534½	– 6½	7.1	...
746⅛	220	Vistry Group	282¾	+ 10¼	...	6.7
434⅛	312	Workspace Group	360¼	– 3¾	7.2	...
920	730	Wynnstay Props♦	895	+ 15	3.2	12.5

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	90	AEP Plantations	180	+ 3	3.4	10.5
30	17⅜	Airea♦	26½		3.8	10.4
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2117	+ 12	3.0	15.0
715⅛	589	Barr (AG)	610	– 5	3.1	14.4
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**‡	4376	– 2	5.6	12.5
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1195	– 14	...	...
181¼	85⅛	C&C Group	99¼	+ 1¼	5.0	...
5⅜	2¼	Capital Metals♦	4¼	+ ¼	...	-35.3
460	271	Churchill China♦	390		5.4	9.8
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4916	– 99	2.1	22.2
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1455	– 10	0.4	10.3
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5210	– 80	2.2	17.6
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1732½	+ 91½	3.6	22.0
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1674	+ 14	3.6	10.4
151½	114½	Fevara	137½	+ 5½	1.7	6.0
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**‡	18940	– 70	3.0	30.4
2185½	1028⅜	Glanbia	2021⅝	+ 41⅜	1.9	37.2
307½	191⅛	Greencore	260⅜		1.0	19.7
83¼	43	Headlam	11½	+ 2	...	-0.1
861	447⅞	Hilton Food	612	+ 3½	5.7	7.0
3632	2626	**Imperial Brands**	2759	+ 12	6.0	11.0
7646½	5567¾	Kerry Group	7161½	– 41¼	1.7	20.9
170	106½	McBride	167⅜	+ 2¼	1.8	8.6
175	85	Mulberry Group♦	170	+ 7½	...	-13.1
1275	880	Nichols♦‡	1040	– 25	3.7	17.7
374	252	Norcros	345	+ 15	3.3	...
379	309	Origin Ents♦	366		4.0	8.6
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47½	Portmeirion♦	50		...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1⅛		...	-55.0
114	65⅛	PZ Cussons	102¾	– 6	3.6	14.3
138	87	REA	111	+ 2	...	-213.5
213⅞	155	Tandem♦	195		1.5	12.6
330	220	The Character Grp♦	315		2.2	-46.7
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	6½	+ ¼	...	-15.1
5542½	3644	**Unilever**‡	4709	– 65	3.4	12.7
1034¾	19½	Victoria♦	62½	– ½	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2195	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1916	+ 28	1.0	73.9
1527	902⅛	**Babcock**	1190	+ 4½	0.6	28.3
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2200	+ 44	1.7	32.0
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1200		1.4	6.4
2285	1376	Braime Group♦	2250		0.7	11.9
550	350	Caffyns‡	400		2.5	-9.8
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.8
340	202¼	Castings‡	295	– 5	6.2	17.0
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	19½	+ ½	...	-7.5
644	446½	Chemring Group	624½	– 5½	1.3	35.1
55	28⅜	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34½		...	-38.3
1538	881⅛	Cohort♦	1282	+ 28	1.4	24.5
534⅝	171	Dialight	504	– 12	...	...
15	5¼	Feedback♦	6		...	-0.2
1270	463¼	Gooch & Housego♦	1225		1.1	89.4
28500	9020	Goodwin	18800	+ 20	1.5	57.5
4902	3194	**Halma**‡	3802	+ 2	0.7	38.6
3145	1951¼	Hill & Smith	3090	+ 80	1.7	30.1
2¾	1	Image Scan♦	2¾		...	-12.9
3142	2184	**IMI**	3130	+ 46	1.1	25.2
7000	3480	Judges Scl.♦	4275	– 25	2.7	51.7
90	34	LPA♦	82½		...	-31.2
685	409⅞	**Melrose**	477¼	– 13¾	1.6	16.5
251½	167	Morgan Advanced	245	+ 5	5.0	32.7
405	200	Mpac♦	332½	+ 17½	...	-10.5
1800	1120	MS Intl♦	1485	+ 15	1.8	22.0
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2898	+ 26	0.8	34.3
2413⅜	1779½	Phillips Elec	1968¼	– 9¾	3.7	-45.9
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	2⅛		...	-3.0
5490	2898¼	Renishaw	5165	– 15	1.5	44.8
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce**‡	1533⅜	– 37	0.7	22.1
489¼	286½	Rotork	487¾	+ 1	1.7	35.3
105	60	SDI Group♦	90	+ 1	...	19.1
318½	161	Senior	292		0.7	-286.3
2073¼	2046¼	SKF Group	2049⅜		3.0	30.4
2754½	2088	**Smiths**	2677	– 22	1.7	31.2
215	135	Solid State♦	186	+ 1	1.5	25.8
245	170	Somero Enter♦	233	+ 3	3.3	16.5
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	7375	+ 30	2.3	33.3
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	3¾	– ⅛	...	-3.6
334	240	Thorpe FW♦	265	+ 12	2.7	12.2
142¾	47	Transense Tech♦	48½		...	5.2
507½	350	Vesuvius	392	+ 8¼	6.0	18.6
710	325	Volex	556	+ 1	0.9	21.3
3580	2254	**Weir**	2696	+ 8	1.6	28.2
2060	843	XP Power	1792	+ 6	...	-42.7

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281		1.0	60.8
12½	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5¼	+ ¼	...	-6.2
8	0⅛	CellBxHealth♦	1⅜		...	-0.2
580	377½	Anpario♦	530		2.4	13.2
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**‡	11850	– 186	2.0	24.2
3⅛	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1¾		...	2.6
259¼	193	**Convatec**	226¾	+ 3	2.5	35.5
38	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	22½		2.4	7.4
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	99½	– ½	...	30.5
32	21⅛	EKF Diagnostics♦	25½	– ¼	...	54.3
12¼	0⅛	Futura Medical♦	0⅝		...	-0.1
32281¼	1943	Genus	2302	+ 42	1.4	78.6
2282	1288⅛	**GSK**	1936½	+ 21	3.6	13.7
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅜		...	-2.0
416⅛	274⅛	**Haleon**	370⅝	+ 4⅞	2.0	19.9
1929	1187	Hikma Pharma	1699	+ 128	3.8	12.6
274	150½	Hutchmed China♦	174½	– 3½	...	4.4
19⅜	1⅛	ImmuPharma♦	4	– ½	...	-10.8
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½	+ ½	...	-15.9
15	6¼	IXICO♦	8		...	-4.3
1	0⅛	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-4.0
77⅝	53⅛	NIOX Group♦	63¼	+ ¾	2.5	37.4
131.50	91.56	Novartis CHF	125.18	+ 0.72	2.9	41.2
962	423½	Oxford Biomedica	591	+ 17	...	-22.0
0⅝	0⅛	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.7
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1¾		...	-1.7
6522⅞	3664	**Reckitt Benck**‡	5248	– 94	4.1	11.2
27	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	24		...	-100.0
29	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	23		...	-9.6
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1098	– 10½	2.7	20.5
256½	140¼	Spire Healthcare	235	+ 2½	0.6	57.3
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6¼	+ ¼	...	1.8
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	71⅛	– ⅛	...	31.1
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4396¼	+ 64¼	4.4	28.2
4606¾	2164⅜	Bayer	4221½	– 15	0.2	-13.4
98⅛	71	Coats Group	85½	+ 2¼	2.9	19.5
3352	2426½	**Croda**	3281	– 8	3.4	73.9
460	230	Cropper (James)♦	450		...	14.6
186½	136	Elementis	186½	+ 5⅞	1.8	-32.2
110	6¼	Hardide♦	100½	– 5½	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper	3045	– 100	4.5	-7.6
2434	1731⅞	Johnson Matthey	2152	– 2	3.6	-37.6
1085	660	Mondi	905	– ¼	1.4	28.2
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	125		4.8	9.2
949½	597	Swire Pacific	914⅞	+ 3⅞	4.1	44.5
12⅞	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8¼		...	-7.6
124	16¼	Synthomer	117⅝	+ 8⅝	...	-1.2
2858¼	2026½	Takeda Pharma	2546⅛	+ 64⅛	3.8	-56.1
825	515	Victrex	816		7.3	25.5
430	320	Wynnstay♦	372½		4.8	37.7
479¾	318½	Zotefoams	427	– 25	1.9	9.2

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	294	– 3	...	14.2
260	160	Celtic♦	213		...	6.0
221⅛	164	Domino's Pizza	205⅜	– 6⅞	5.5	13.6
1022	500⅛	**Entain**	537		3.6	-5.1
73	19¼	Evoke	44¼		...	-0.4
55	29	Gaming Realms♦	32	+ ½	...	15.7
310	210	Heavitree♦	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦	225		2.9	4.2
175.70	115.03	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$158.75	– 1.50	1.2	32.3
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	283	+ ½	...	9.5
297	129⅜	On The Beach	188¼	– 2⅝	2.1	34.2
161	86	Rank Group	100⅜	+ ⅜	2.9	10.6
214⅝	137½	SSP	212½	+ ¾	2.1	-22.8
0⅜	0½	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
823	530½	Wetherspoon JD	810	– 2	1.5	13.5
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2528	+ 7	3.8	20.5

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51½	Aeorema Comms♦	60	– 1½	4.4	47.7
29	18	Altitude Group♦	23½		...	-94.0
115	70½	Arcontech Group♦	79½	+ ½	5.0	11.3
844⅜	418½	**Autotrader**	511¾	– 8¼	2.3	15.0
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	644	+ 7	2.5	19.4
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1⅝		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0¼	Catenæ♦	0⅛		...	-3.1
22	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅜		...	-0.9
785½	262½	Future	317⅝	+ 1	5.4	5.1
154	60¼	GlobalData	84	+ ¾	1.8	19.1
110	44	IG Design Group♦	100½	+ ½	1.0	-0.9
1000	719	**Informa**‡	905¼	– 6⅜	2.5	...
87⅜	65⅛	ITV	73¼	+ 1¼	6.8	12.4
220	98½	ME Group	120½	– 3	7.0	8.0
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	13.4
27	12	Mission Group♦	18		...	-0.8
220½	139½	Mony Group‡	201	– 5¾	6.3	13.1
2341⅜	1624½	News Corp A	2196¾	+ 103¾	0.7	...
2606⅞	1891½	News Corp B	2504⅞	+ 115¼	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦‡	319½	+ 5	4.8	-10.7
1337	874½	**Pearson**	1229	– 10	2.1	23.9
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
75⅜	40½	Reach‡	42¼	+ ⅛	14.0	-1.0
59	40	React♦	42½		...	-29.3
3821	1991	**Relx**‡	2603	– 112	2.6	23.1
827	393½	Rightmove	469¾	– 6	2.3	16.7
270	131	SpaceandPeople♦	137½		...	6.4
133	95½	STV Group	106½	+ ½	...	-9.9
470	170½	System1 Group♦	325		1.8	31.2
4610½	4494	21st Cent Fox A	4589		0.9	...
3358	3306½	21st Cent Fox B	3358		1.2	...
369	230	Wilmington	278	– 2	4.2	21.6
409½	218½	WPP	395	+ 87⅞	3.8	7.9
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½		...	-5.5

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy‡	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8½	H-Power♦	10¾	– ⅛	...	-4.5
89⅜	36½	Afentra♦	62	+ 1¾	...	-59.6
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.1
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-14.9
2⅞	1	Aminex	1⅜	+ ⅛	...	-15.5
8924	3349½	Anglo Amer Plat	6322½	+ 62½	7.2	23.7
4239	2078	**Anglo Amer**	3976	– 45	0.7	-16.2
435	154½	Anglo Asian Mng♦‡	417½	+ 4½	0.7	36.3
4475	1924	**Antofagasta**	3974	– 76	1.2	39.7
1¼	0⅛	Arc Minerals♦	0⅜		...	-1.2
2⅛	1⅛	Ariana Resources♦	1⅛		...	-150.0
0⅜	0⅛	Arkle Resources♦	0⅜		...	-10.2
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1½		...	-13.0
1094	440½	Atalaya Mine	954	– 6	1.0	18.3
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3	+ ¼	...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	9	+ ¾	...	-2.7

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	53,885.10 (-464.02)
Nasdaq	26,348.35 (-15.09)
S&P 500	7,709.96 (-13.59)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	65683.26 (-617.18)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25530.28 (-385.54)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1112.47 (+1.13)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9452.00 (+46.60)
Frankfurt	
DAX	26140.13 (+13.83)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5638.99 (+57.62)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5760.20 (-15.75)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8699.71 (+30.41)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14518.75 (-32.81)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6502.56 (+25.58)
London	
FTSE100	10867.89 (-20.41)
FTSE250	24695.42 (+62.79)
FTSE350	5921.35 (-8.26)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5092.90 (+4.14)
FTSE All Share	5856.14 (-7.92)
FTSE Non Financials	6422.13 (nc)
TechMark Focus	9595.45 (+81.09)
US$	1.3465 (-0.0013)
Euro	1.1674 (+0.0007)
SDR	0.9857 (-0.0001)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0½	0	Bezant Resources♦	0½		...	9.5
3495	1918	BHP Group	3303	+ 2	3.1	25.0
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	11	+ ¼	...	-93.0
122½	10½	Bougainville	10¾	– ¼	...	-15.8
609¾	399⅜	**BP**	519¼	+ 4¼	4.8	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.6
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	5¼	+ ½	...	-10.0
5½	2¾	Cadogan Energy	3¼		...	-11.2
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1520	+ 20	2.8	7.2
3¼	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	152½	+ 2⅛	7.9	-4.8
2¼	1¼	Chariot Ltd♦	1½		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.3
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	9½		...	-1.9
300½	108½	DRD Gold	168¼	– 2⅛	2.4	14.3
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0¼		...	-3.3
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2390	**Endeavour**	3888	+ 46	3.4	18.7
28	9¾	EnQuest	22¼	+ ¼	3.5	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2¼		...	15.3
2¾	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1¼	– ⅛	...	-9.0
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅜		...	-4.5
4472	1512	**Fresnillo**	2738	– 9	4.1	19.6
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	24	+ 1½	...	-6.5
12½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	3⅝		...	-5.1
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	3⅜	– ⅜	...	-0.1
3⅜	1⅝	Getech♦	3⅜		...	-7.4
707¼	275¼	**Glencore**	566	– 7⅞	2.2	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration♦	0⅜		...	-4.5
4582¾	2310¼	Gold Fields	2773½	– 22¾	4.2	...
21	6¼	Goldplat♦	17½	+ ¾	3.0	29.2
2	0¼	Goldstone Res♦	0¾	+ ⅛	...	-1.0
800	230	Greatland Resources♦	602½	+ 9	...	18.1
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	300	+ 2	...	33.4
235	160⅜	Gulf Keystone	170¾	+ 1¼	7.4	32.9
858	246½	Hochschild	480	+ ⅜	0.9	16.6
553	294	Hunting	447	+ 3	2.2	23.0
0¼	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.1
219¾	57⅜	ITM Power♦	109¼	+ 6¼	...	-14.8
5¼	2½	Jubilee Metals♦	2½		...	-3.4
1¼	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0⅜		...	-3.9
2¼	0½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1⅜		...	-10.7
345	178⅜	Kenmare Res	200	+ 2	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	1¾		...	-1.8
0½	0½	Lansdowne Resources♦	0½		...	-1.5
4⅞	2¾	Lexington Gold♦	2⅞		...	-29.5
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	13½	+ ½	...	17.3
0⅞	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0⅜		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4		...	-0.0
0⅝	0¼	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-17.2
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	10⅞	Orosur Mining♦	15	+ ¼	...	...
190½	59⅝	Pan African Res	102½	– 2⅛	2.1	19.2
33¼	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	12⅝		...	-43.9
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	21½		...	3.2
22½	5¾	Petra Diamonds	6½		...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	0⅞		...	-4.0
1¾	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1⅜		...	-4.8
9	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3⅛		...	-1.2
920	672	Porvair§	898	+ 24	0.8	22.8
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	3¾	+ ¼	...	-4.6
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-5.9
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	65½	– 1½	...	-818.8
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5324⅛	Rio Tinto Ltd	9219¼	– 137½	3.7	17.4
9117	4436½	**Rio Tinto**	7457	– 54	4.6	16.4
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0⅜		...	-15.4
375	184¼	Serabi Gold♦	297	+ 20	1.7	5.6
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	232	+ 7	6.9	-24.0
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**	3315	+ 34½	4.6	14.7
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	2¾	– ⅛	...	-2.1
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾		...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	24½		...	-4.4
4½	0⅜	Sunda Energy♦	1½		...	-1.4
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-2.8
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0¼	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0¼		...	-6.8
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6385⅝	+ 59½	4.7	12.5
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	14	– ¼	...	47.1
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4		...	-2.7
0⅝	0⅛	Vast Resources#	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3¼		...	-8.3
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1¼		...	-5.7
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3¼		...	-7.7

Professional & Support Services

5095	2980	4imprint	5000	+ 110	3.6	16.6
585	464	Andrews Sykes♦	575		4.5	13.3
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	106	– ½	4.3	20.0
2848	1981	**Bunzl**	2832	+ 8	2.6	20.1
416	215	Capita	254½	+ 2	...	-1.8
49⅞	23⅛	CEPS♦	39		...	-11.1
165	90	Christie Group♦	152½		2.3	30.0
2581¼	2000	**Compass**	2406½	– 49½	2.1	29.4
87	64½	Croma Security♦	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6375	– 10	3.4	...
34	15	Diales Grp♦	32		4.7	24.6
7725	4970	**Diploma**	7680	+ 5	0.8	55.7
840	505	DiscoverIE	832	+ 9	1.6	27.5
114⅝	78¾	Essentra	113¼	+ 5¼	1.9	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2830	– 21	1.8	23.2
330	110	FIH Group♦	137½	+ 2½	4.9	-3.4
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	794	– 10	5.0	8.5
5855	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5840		2.8	26.8
250¼	163½	Int'l Workplace	185¼	– 3	0.5	...
172½	123⅜	Johnson Service	149¾	– 1½	3.2	16.1
554	360	Journeo♦	500	– 5	...	20.6
254½	178⅜	Kier Group	248¾	+ ⅜	3.1	19.4
1170	910	Latham (J)♦§	1025	+ 15	3.6	11.1
3700	2100	London Security♦	3600		2.7	18.6
298	204	LSL Property Servs	255	+ 7	4.5	15.4
100½	59¾	Macfarlane	75¾	+ ⅞	4.9	18.9
190	71¼	Maintel Holdings♦	72½		...	-6.1
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	21½		...	-2.8
452	310	Mears Group	430	– ½	4.2	7.7
282¼	101¾	Michael Page	187¾	– ¾	2.5	64.5
214	134⅜	Mitie Group§	206¾	– ⅜	2.2	31.3
15¾	0⅜	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅜	Newmark Security♦	110		...	15.6
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	185		...	5.8
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦	123½		6.1	4.1
187½	110	NWF Group♦	152	+ 8	5.7	8.2
61¾	42	PCI-PAL♦	60	+ 1	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10½		...	-15.3
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0¾	0½	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¾		...	-3.1
64	41⅜	Record	44¾	+ ¼	8.1	11.4
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	918	– 2	2.2	14.9
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**	363½	– 5½	2.6	26.3
310	222	Restore♦	304	– 3	2.4	-64.7
7	1½	River Global A♦§	2½		...	-0.3
30	13½	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
752½	536⅜	RS Group	746½	+ 5	3.1	21.6
150	85	RTC Group♦	87½		7.7	6.2
120	68	RWS Holdings♦	118¼	+ 2½	5.4	-4.4
612	520	Science Group♦	585		1.7	7.8
325¾	207	Serco	260	+ 17⅜	1.8	18.1
79⅜	54	Smiths News	73	+ 1	7.6	6.2
30	13½	Software Circle♦	16⅞	+ ⅝	...	-80.5
52½	36⅞	Staffline Group♦	44¼	– 1¾	...	11.4
274¼	132½	SThree	271½	+ 1½	5.3	19.8
350	146	Synectics♦	182½		2.7	8.3
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	0⅛		...	-0.6
74	46	Tribal♦	64		2.0	15.2
84¼	58	Vianet♦	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP	463½	– 1	5.8	13.8

Retailing

117⅜	82½	AO World	97⅜	– ½	...	15.3
269¼	140	B&M European	234⅜	+ 2¼	4.1	14.4
115¼	58¼	Card Factory	75½	– ⅞	6.6	8.4
1648	1062	CVS Group	1297	+ 8	0.7	17.6
204	113	DFS Furniture	150	+ 1	0.7	14.3
1249	707	Dunelm	888	– 4½	7.9	11.5
840	598	Frasers Group	815	+ 2	...	9.4
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1925	– 8	3.6	16.0
248	123⅛	Halfords	244	– 1	3.7	16.1
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	834	+ 1	2.6	17.0
895	640½	Inchcape§	826½	– 17	4.1	11.4
1⅜	0⅛	Imaging Biometrics	0⅝	+ ⅛	...	-4.0
106½	64	**JD Sports**	93½	+ ¾	1.3	10.8
372¼	240½	**Kingfisher**	325⅞	+ 2¼	3.8	23.2
418⅜	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	406⅜	– 3	1.0	32.0
4	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0¾		...	0.6
93¼	61⅜	Naked Wines♦	75	+ 2	...	-8.2
15900	11200	**Next**	15715	+ 55	1.7	20.7
397⅞	140¼	Ocado	210¾	– 1	...	4.5
241⅜	167½	Pets at Home	212¾	– ⅜	3.5	15.4
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	428	– 5	...	89.2
730	173¼	Saga	721	+ 8	...	...
380½	291⅛	**Sainsbury's**	354¼	– 1¾	3.9	20.5
1120	378⅜	WH Smith	442¾	+ 2¾	...	-4.0
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13	– ½	...	92.9
510½	406⅞	**Tesco**	475¼	– 5	3.0	17.3
50	30½	Topps Tiles	35½	– ⅝	8.7	11.6

Technology

252	140½	Alfa Financial	165		5.8	16.2
307	195	Aptitude Software	198	+ 3	2.7	27.1
129	55	Bango♦	63	+ 2	...	-8.6
20	12	BATM Adv Coms	12⅞	– ⅛	...	-4.1
33	19⅜	Berkeley Res	25		...	-65.5
3¼	1¼	Blackbird♦	1½		...	-2.4
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦§	107		3.2	-119.1
28	12½	Cirata♦	13⅞	– ⅜	...	-3.1
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0¼		...	0.4
4962	2222	**Computacenter**	4884	+ 72	1.5	33.3
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	255		0.5	43.5
13½	7½	Corero♦	8¾	+ ½	...	-117.8
2644	988	Craneware♦	1340	+ 24	2.5	32.1
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	20.8
9⅞	5½	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9¾		...	-8.4
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	10¼		...	-7.4
0⅝	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¼	94½	FDM Group	108⅞	– 2	6.5	20.8
480	114	Filtronic♦	242		...	...
265	180½	GB Group	231		1.9	-7.5
51	24	Ilika♦	25¾	– ¼	...	-6.4
138	56	Ingenta♦	69½	+ 6	6.5	5.8
178	73	Intercede♦	116	+ 6	...	20.4
28½	11½	Iomart♦	12½	+ ⅛	...	-1.5
72⅞	4½	IQE♦	43½	+ ⅞	...	-11.5
4453½	912½	LG Electronics	1463	+ 13⅛	1.7	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	64½	– 1	3.2	14.8
14½	2	Nanoco Group	2½		...	-2.2
138	94½	Netcall♦	118		0.8	48.2
36	22	Northamber♦	24½		2.4	-1.7
60⅝	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	38	– ⅜	8.6	-69.1
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29	– ½	...	-5.8
447	210	Playtech	363¾	– 2¾	...	0.9
50	33½	Pulsar Group♦	35		...	-4.5
570¼	398½	QinetiQ§	547	+ ½	2.0	27.2
117	88	RM	97	+ 1	...	37.3
6½	2½	Seeing Machines♦	4⅜	– ⅛	...	-10.7
69½	35½	Shearwater Group♦	62	+ ½	...	-1.5
1998	1083	Softcat	1992	+ 17	1.5	29.9
50	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	553½	Tele Ericsson	757¾	– 1⅞	3.1	11.4
1200	771½	**The Sage Grp**	1027½	+ 14½	2.2	27.2
91⅜	52½	Touchstar♦§	84½	– 1	3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	322½	– 10	0.8	...
400	230	Triad Group§	390	– 4	2.3	39.3
330	210	Water Intel♦	307½		...	14.4
150	96½	Xaar	118	– 1	...	-27.4
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	11½	– ¼	...	-4.1

Telecoms

436¼	206	**Airtel Africa**	332	+ 5	1.6	24.0
242⅜	173	**BT Group**§	200	– 1¼	4.2	18.2
169½	106	Currys	160⅞	– 1¾	1.9	10.4
1186	687	Gamma Comms	968	– 2	2.3	13.9
247⅝	116½	Helios Towers§	197⅞	+ 2¾	0.9	72.0
0⅜	0½	Gana Media♦	0⅜		...	-3.5
1936	638	Telecom Plus§	865	+ 6	5.8	8.5
131½	82½	**Vodafone**	119¼	+ 4⅞	3.3	-84.4

Transport

260	203½	Braemar§	228		3.1	31.5
5485	3365	Clarkson	4990	– 6	2.3	23.3
683½	332½	EasyJet	670	+ 18¼	2.0	10.2
240½	152½	FirstGroup§	182⅞	– 2¼	3.9	8.5
554	320	Fisher (James)	480	+ 4	...	-55.2
492⅞	332½	**Intl Cons Air**	446	+ 1½	1.5	7.3
685	458	Irish Cont	675	+ 10	2.1	16.9
38½	17	Mobico Group	24⅞		...	-1.1
7	1½	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1110	– 37	...	...

Utilities

220¼	151½	**Centrica**	153¾	+ 2¼	3.7	-102.5
937½	613½	Drax Group	718½	– 1	4.2	34.7
485	420	Jersey Electricity	440		5.0	12.3
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1196	+ 8½	4.1	18.3
606	439½	Pennon§	464⅞	+ 6¾	6.3	23.9
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3116	+ 34	4.0	25.2
2767½	1597	**SSE**§	2376	+ 34	2.9	22.5
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1428	+ 11	3.8	16.6

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2871	– 51	2.9	5.3
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	384½	+ 1	3.5	12.0
1758	1408¾	Aberforth Smlr§	1708	– 6	2.8	26.7
1391	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1383	– 3	2.1	74.8
396	321	Artemis UK Future Lead§	389	– 2½	4.0	31.4
220	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	263½	– 2	1.7	52.0
194	154½	AVI Japan	168	+ 1	1.3	57.1
331	263	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	310	+ 4	0.8	...
124	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	123½	+ 2½	0.6	...
1082	811¼	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1080	+ 10	0.9	...
173⅜	123	Baillie Gifford SN	170½	– ¾	0.4	...
231	180¼	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	227	+ 2	2.7	36.4
153¾	121¾	Bankers Invstmt Tst§	152½		1.9	67.8
445	385	BH Macro GBP	421	+ 4½	...	19.9
1704	804	Biotech Growth	1680	+ 20	...	-884.2
289½	197	BlckRck Amer Inc	283	– 4	5.3	...
205	118½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	181	+ 4	3.2	51.7
208	162½	BlckRck Fro Inv	190½	– 2	4.0	25.3
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	611	+ 5	1.2	88.7
238	198	BlckRck Inc&Grth§	229		3.4	31.7
288⅜	230½	BlckRck Smlr§	279½	+ 3	2.8	31.9
1072½	543⅜	BlckRck Wld Min	952	– 4	2.5	39.6
1665	1274	Brown Adv US Sm	1635	+ 5	...	-273.0
1582	1336	Brunner§	1556	– 16	1.7	55.9
395	312	Caledonia Inv§	388	+ 1½	2.0	50.4
599	486	City of Lon IT§	593		3.7	27.5
155⅜	87	Crystal Amber Fd	89		-64.5	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	500	– 8	5.6	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	362	– ½	3.7	29.8
120	92	CT UK HIT B§	112		5.3	23.1
126	97	CT UK HIT§	119½		5.0	24.6
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent§	475		...	...
860	737½	Edinburgh IT	856	+ 2	3.7	32.2
294½	186¼	Edin Wwide	240	– 3½	...	-216.2
1332	325¼	**F&C Inv Trust**	343⅜	– ⅜	1.2	76.4
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	606	+ 8	3.4	26.9
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	264	– ½	3.4	28.6
1574	811	FdltyEmrgMkt	1430	+ 4	1.4	62.1
442	367½	Fidelity European Trust	441	+ 3	2.2	39.0
473	372	Fidlty Spec Val	470		2.2	38.3
915	706½	Fins Gwth & Inc	815	– 2	2.5	43.1
85⅝	69¼	GCP Infrastructure§	81⅞	– 1¾	8.5	38.1
370	312	Global Opps Tst	337	+ 2½	3.1	43.2
95	91½	Golden Prospect§	94		-14.0	...
68⅞	57⅛	Greencoat Renew	67¾	+ ⅜	-16.7	...
118⅞	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	115	– ⅞	9.3	-13.2
344	250	Hansa Investment Co§	328	– 6	1.3	74.5
330	244	Hansa Inv Co A§	321	+ 1	1.4	73.0
3480	2660	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3430	– 15	...	-57.7
212½	173½	Hend High Inc	209	+ 1½	5.3	18.5
988	769	Hend Smlr	988	+ 12	2.9	37.8
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	3035	– 25	...	...
524	318½	HgCapital Trust	391	– 1	1.3	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra	138⅝	– ⅜	6.1	10.1
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1468	+ 6	2.9	-413.5
494¼	379	Impax Env Mkts	438	– 1	1.2	88.7
519	368⅛	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	493	– 4½	3.9	50.2
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc§	170½	– ½	7.2	13.0
426	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc§	421	– 5	3.8	84.0
1258	1041	JPM American	1244	– 4	0.9	...
652	392	JPM Asia Gro & Inc§	576	+ 2	5.4	...
313	250½	JPM China§	277	+ 1	4.9	71.2
986	787⅛	JPM Claverhs§	978	+ 6	3.7	29.0
310	181¼	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	250½	+ 1½	0.2	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts§	163⅜	– 1¾	4.6	71.0
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	633	+ 1	2.5	34.8
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	204		2.9	35.9
638½	529¾	JPM GG&I	636	– 1	3.9	76.9
1098	799	JPM India§	892	– 1	5.0	...
849	639	JPM Japan	836	+ 5	1.0	82.4
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	449	+ 3½	0.7	...
1278	977⅜	Law Debenture	1266	– 2	2.9	34.0
190	143	Lowland Inv	188½	+ 2	3.6	28.0
139	138	Marwyn Val Inv§	138½		15.3	...
285½	234¼	Mercantile IT	285		2.9	30.8
686	536	Merchants Trust§	680	+ 2	4.4	22.2
804	682	Mid Wynd	790	– 8	1.1	...
1664	1352	Monks Inv Trust§	1614	– 24	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml§	177	– 1	0.9	91.2
1036	854⅛	Murray Income Trust§	1010	– 12	4.1	26.2
372½	284	Murray Intl§	369½	+ ½	3.4	26.6
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	418	– 2	1.4	74.6
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	399	+ 2	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**	3904	– 38	1.4	3.7
555	508	Personal Assets	552	– 2	1.0	91.5
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	669	– 11	...	-796.4
83	63¼	Renewables Infra	77	– 1½	9.8	-14.3
2645	1922	RIT Cap Ptnr	2615	+ 15	1.7	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	599	+ 1	...	-37.1
738	488¼	Schroder TotRt	704	– 5	1.6	71.8
892	594¾	Schrd Asia Pac	826	– 2	1.6	62.5
376	310	Schrod Inc Gwth	375		3.9	29.9
401	268	Schrod Jap Gwth	390	– 1	3.1	56.4
778	652	Schrod UKMid§	770		2.9	30.8
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17¼		...	-71.7
571	480⅛	Scot American	565	– 1	2.9	36.1
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1364½	– 15	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco§	86⅝	– ⅜	7.9	12.7
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	231		3.7	35.6
352	196⅛	Temp Emg Mkt	312½	– 4	1.7	58.0
428	329	Temple Bar	426	+ 6½	3.7	30.9
198⅝	162¾	The Glbl Smaller§	195¾	– 1⅜	1.6	66.4
9	0⅝	Potentially AI	6⅝	– ¼	-1.6	...
364½	291	TR Property	317	– 1½	5.1	20.1
198	187	UIL	192½		19.0	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt§	290	– 1	3.3	21.4
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	714	– 4	...	4.6
398	306½	Ww Health	378	+ 4	0.6	...

◆AIM company; # Price at suspension; § Ex dividend; ♱ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; ☆ figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.91316 (+0.00612)
Canada $	1.88787 (+0.0019)
Denmark Kr	8.72751 (+0.01871)
Euro	1.1671 (+0.0021)
Hong Kong $	10.551 (-0.008)
Hungary	425.27 (+3.92)
Indonesia	24117.2 (+24.74)
Israel	4.0527 (+0.0073)
Japan Yen	213.092 (+0.75)
New Zealand $	2.29182 (+0.00481)
Norway Kr	12.8576 (+0.0377)
Poland	5.01893 (+0.01793)
Russia	109.666 (+0.67)
S Africa	21.98794 (+0.01146)
Sweden Kr	12.7892 (+0.0239)
Switzerland Fr	1.09371 (+0.00756)
Turkey Lira	64.0289 (-0.0234)
USA $	1.3454 (-0.001)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4248.8

Close $4249.096 **High** $4304.15

Low $4230.72

AM $4281.10 **PM** $4267.85

Platinum $1729.9

Silver $61.2425

Palladium $1376.401

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7275	8.7089	-149.736	-421.529
Euro	1.1671	1.1651	-15.02	-42.33
Montreal	1.8879	1.8856	-25.25	-76.9
New York	1.3454	1.3464	-0.59	-0.05
Oslo	12.8576	12.8

A degree of work experience, please

Fears over jobs means that employability can often outrank course content for many, writes **Jane Hamilton**

Despite concerns about the state of the graduate job market, the latest figures from Ucas suggests that taking a degree remains highly desirable. British universities and colleges have made a record 1.3 million offers to school-leavers, up from 1.2 million last year.

But as A-level results day approaches, a distinct change is underway in how students select their degree. Instead of opting for three years of dreaming spires, monetary concerns and fierce competition for jobs are pushing thousands of students to choose courses offering work experience.

A recent study by City St George's, University of London, found that 97 per cent of prospective students said work experience was an important aspect of course content, while 87 per cent now rank employability skills training among their top five criteria for choosing a university.

"We're seeing a clear shift in the early careers world. Work experience isn't a nice-to-have any more, it's becoming crucial to most young people's entire trajectory," Ollie Sidwell, co-founder of Higherin, the student jobs site, said. "Employability now outranks course content itself for many students when choosing where to study."

With the average level of student debt at £53,000, would-be students are assessing their degree's "return on investment" — and it is an area where former polytechnics with strong links to industry are flourishing.

The East London University was recently ranked second in the UK for graduate employability by the annual graduate outcomes survey, an achievement that its vice-chancellor, Professor Amanda Broderick, attributes to its employability programmes.

Its Careers Guarantee offers work experience with a London employer while its Mental Wealth and Professional Fitness course develops the essential soft skills that employers often complain are lacking.

Academic knowledge remains essential, but knowledge alone is no longer enough. Employers need people who can communicate, collaborate, adapt and keep learning," Broderick said.

Meanwhile Kingston University's Future Skills programme connects students with major businesses including Adobe, Coca-Cola, Unilever, the John Lewis Partnership and IBM. Undergraduates work on live briefs, helping develop innovative solutions to tackle problems around sustainability and supplier relationships.

Professor Steven Spier, vice-chancellor of Kingston University, said: "By supporting our students to treat career preparation as an essential part of their studies rather than an optional activity, we are creating a cohort of graduates with the skills businesses have told us they value."

The types of work experience on offer range from complete sandwich years and full summer internships with a single company to multiple, shorter placements, or live projects and industry challenges.

Some, including Huddersfield, support students to develop portfolio careers alongside study, encouraging entrepreneurship. According to Jane Owen-Lynch, pro vice-chancellor: "Work experience and academic studies should be seen as complementary activities for university students, not isolated pursuits."

'Don't be too picky over where you want to work'

Case study

Lois Davies studied fashion brand marketing at Huddersfield University while undertaking a placement in sports business and retailing with Huddersfield Town Football Club.

Davies, originally from Wrexham, said: "Being a first-generation student from a working-class background, I wanted to get the most employability out of my education, so I did a lot of research on universities and their course structures.

"While my placement was very different to my degree, I was given a lot of autonomy and trust over projects from a very early stage, pushing my independence in my work.

"I also found that my course was very adaptable in terms of transferring across industries, and realised I loved working in sports.

"The world of employment is so competitive now. So,whatever experience or work opportunity you are offered as a student, take it.

"Don't be picky with where you want to work when you're building your experience — be open to different things as you might love it."

Top tips when seeking a degree with work experience

Chris Webb, a career consultant at the University of Huddersfield, explains how to make the right choice.

- Understand what an industry placement year/sandwich placement is, how it works and what support your target universities can provide to help you secure a placement.
- Read the module overview for the degree courses you are interested in and check where work experience features in the course content. Are there specific work experience modules? Will there be live briefs or consultancy projects? Can you go on industry visits or connect with employers?
- Use graduate job sites like Gradcracker, TargetJobs and Bright Network to assess internships and placements so you see the range of potential opportunities.
- Be open-minded about different forms of work experience.
- Research how each course helps you to prepare and reflect on your work experience, and use your careers service.
- If you are interested in a particular sector or specific employer, find out which businesses universities already partner with.

Six from the best

Charlotte Bosworth began life on a West Midlands council estate before taking a legal apprenticeship and rising to a senior role at OCR Exam Board. With 25 years' experience in skills development, she's now CEO of the apprenticeship provider Lifetime Training and focuses on helping employers remove barriers to progression.

1. **Don't wait for permission to lead**: You don't need to be invited into the room to contribute. Show up, ask questions and make sure your voice is heard.
2. **Focus matters more than size**: You don't need scale to succeed. Focus and execution matter more. You don't need to be the biggest organisation in your sector if you're clear on where you add value.
3. **Don't be afraid to challenge the system**: Even if you work closely with regulators and government, you won't always agree and you shouldn't be afraid to say so.
4. **Don't over-plan your career**: Some of the most important moves you make will be reactive. What matters is recognising when you're in an environment that offers growth and then throwing yourself into it.
5. **Create psychological safety:** Inclusive leadership is about creating space for different perspectives, especially from those newest to an organisation.
6. **Great leaders design on ramps, not hurdles**: Recognise that not everyone starts from the same place. By offering stepping stones and structured support, you will build more resilient teams.

Appointment of the week

TrustMark not-for-profit seeks chief executive

TrustMark is seeking a chief executive. As the only UK government-endorsed quality scheme for home improvements and a not-for-profit organisation, TrustMark exists to drive quality, confidence and consumer protection across the industry while supporting the long-term development of a safer, more sustainable built environment.

Reporting to the board, and as TrustMark's principal ambassador, the appointee will build trusted relationships across government, industry, regulators and commercial partners, ensuring the organisation remains influential, relevant and positioned for future growth.

Interest is encouraged from candidates from construction, retrofit, energy efficiency, home improvement, the wider-built environment or another regulated, consumer-focused sector.

The salary range is £150,000 to £160,000 with an executive benefits package, discretionary bonus and car allowance. The role is based in Basingstoke, with regular office presence required.

Apply by August 23 at: appointments.thetimes.com

Working week

Pirates threaten work data

Employees could be putting sensitive business data at risk. Over two thirds of people who pirate sports, TV shows and films do so using company smartphones, but more than half say their device has been infected with malware in the past 12 months — more than three times the national rate. James Bore, a consultant at BeStreamWise, said: "Malware can be an entry point into company networks."

Esports a new ball game

Almost half of Gen Z believe professional gaming is a legitimate career path, and 52 per cent of 18 to 29-year-olds support the addition of esports to the school curriculum. Over a third of people are unaware of careers such as tournament organisers, team managers and coaches, and esports commentators and strategist. "Esports is a major cultural phenomenon," Derek Perez at Logitech G, said.

Careers support shunned

Some 35 per cent of A-level students did not use their school or college careers service in the last 12 months and those considering apprenticeships were the least likely to engage. Chris Rea from Prospects, the early careers expert, said: "Careers support can play an important role in helping students feel more confident about their future plans, yet too many miss out on advice and guidance that could help them make informed decisions."

Gifts given under pressure

The average employee spends £200 a year on gifts for colleagues, including birthdays and leaving presents. While 25 per cent are happy to contribute, a further 17 per cent do not like giving towards gifts for people they barely know. Another 10 per cent feel "under pressure" to contribute, with 11 per cent paying in even when personal circumstances meant they could not afford to, according to Thortful, the card and gift company.

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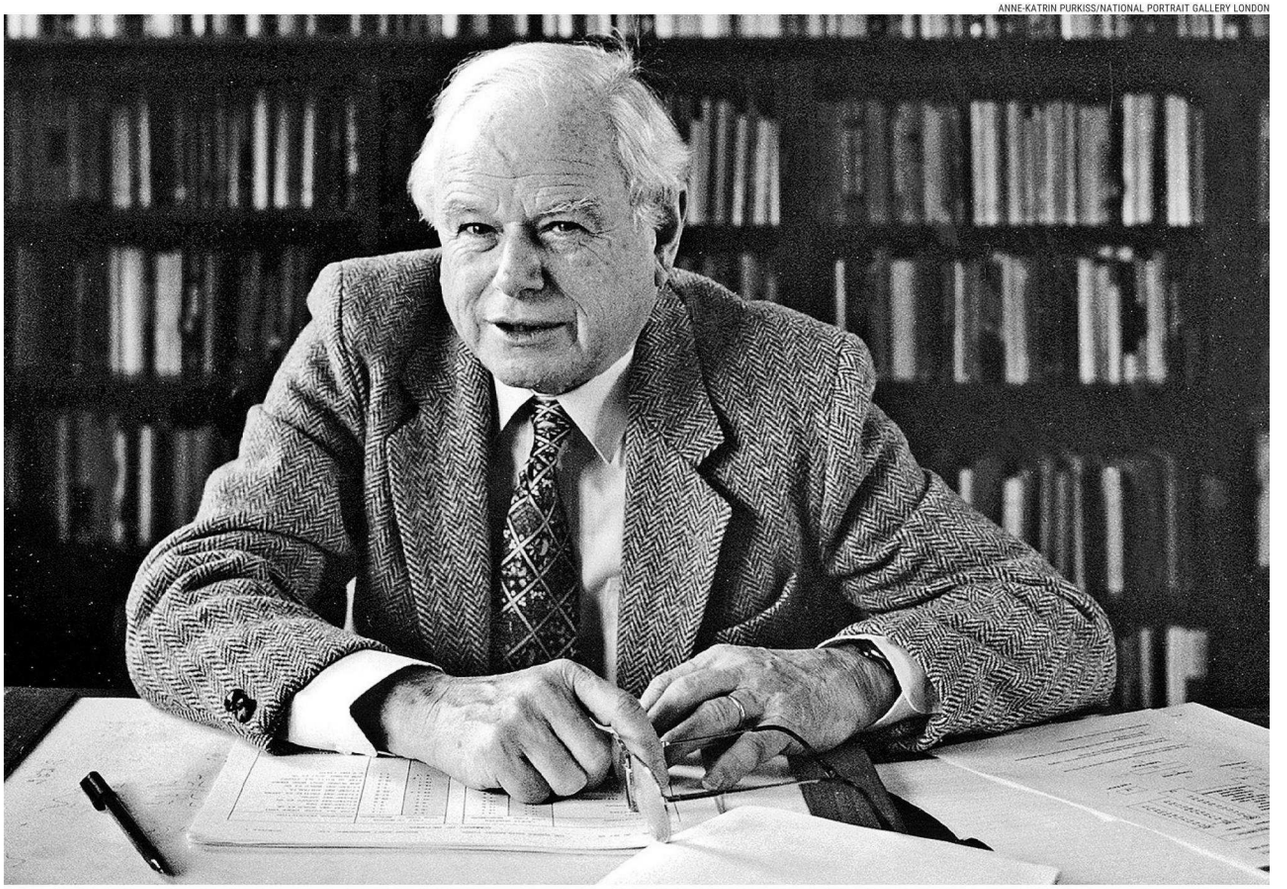
Register

Obituaries

Sir Anthony Kenny

Philosopher whose brilliant but doubting mind led him away from the Roman Catholic church and into the groves of academe

ANNE-KATRIN PURKISS/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY LONDON



Kenny in 1998. He arrived on the scene when analytic philosophy was at its zenith and was the most formidable figure of his day in public debate while at Oxford

As outstanding philosopher, master of Balliol and pro-vice chancellor of Oxford University, Anthony Kenny was, like his hero St Thomas More, "a man for all seasons".

In writing, teaching and public debate that ranged from Aristotle to Wittgenstein, from nuclear deterrence to the legal definition of murder, the former Catholic priest was a giant of Oxford academe for some five decades.

His philosophical life pivoted on the existential uncertainty that led to him leaving the Catholic priesthood in 1963. Sceptical of the Aristotelian proofs of faiths, formalised by Thomas Aquinas, that the Catholic Church holds so dear, he wrote *The Five Ways* (1969), which examined Aquinas's proofs of the existence of God, and *The God of the Philosophers* (1979), in which he systematically worked his way through the doubts that had assailed him as a young Catholic priest. He showed that none of Aquinas's proofs was sound, and argued persuasively that the concept of an omnipotent, omniscient and benevolent God was not coherent.

Kenny was also a first-rate historian of philosophy, writing with sensitivity, exegetical sympathy and critical acumen. In 1968 he published *Descartes*, a book that remained a standard text for the next three decades. In it he paid due homage to Descartes's genius and to the tightly woven texture of his reasoning, while exposing the incoherence of his conception of the human mind and of its relation to the body. In effect, he pitted what he had learnt from the study of Wittgenstein against Cartesian dualism and the Cartesian conception of consciousness and self-consciousness.

In 1973 he published *Wittgenstein*, in which he gave a lucid survey of the main contours of Wittgenstein's philosophy. From Wittgenstein he turned to Aristotelian ethics and philosophy of mind. His book *The Aristotelian Ethics* (1978) was followed by *Aristotle on the Will* (1979) and *Aristotle on the Perfect Life* (1992) and *Aquinas on Mind* (1993). In 1998 he published a popular *A Brief History of Western Philosophy*. This was later followed by his masterwork on the history of philosophy, the four-volume *A New History of Western Philosophy* (published in 2004-07), which many felt supplanted Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*.

Arriving on the philosophical scene when Oxford analytic philosophy was at its zenith, he lived to see and to mourn its sunset. Kenny established himself as the most distinguished philosopher of mind working within the Wittgensteinian tradition. His primary preoccupation was with the nature of the will, of intentional action, and of practical reasoning. A sequel to his first work was *Will, Freedom and Power* (1975), in which he explored the logical character of power and ability, and defended with great originality a compatibilist view of determinism and free will.

Contrary to received tradition, he argued that human freedom requires both liberty of spontaneity and liberty of indifference. What is distinctive of humanity, he claimed, is the power to act for reasons; and he proceeded to explore the nature, presuppositions and consequences of this distinctive capacity. These investigations duly led to *Freewill and Responsibility* (1978), which in turn branched into reflections on legal responsibility, on the legal definition of murder, the limits of the excuse of duress, and the nature of *mens rea* (guilty mind). With characteristic rigour, Kenny acquired the legal expertise he thought necessary by studying for the Bar examinations, which he sat successfully in 1981-82.

His writings on these themes, and his exchanges with leading legal figures of the day, including the lord chancellor, were influential in subsequent law reforms. His *The Metaphysics of Mind* (1989) gave a masterly overview of the philosophy of mind in the analytic tradition established by Wittgenstein and Ryle.

Able to unfurl his analytic acumen lightly with humour and wit, Kenny was captivating and lucid from the lectern. In public debate he was the most formidable figure of his day in Oxford, impeccably courteous, ruthless in exposing error and confusion and able to discern the heart of a philosophical problem and to sketch the outline of a solution, although he lacked the patience to paint a broad canvas with all the necessary detail.

For all his gifts as a philosopher, he viewed the subject as a propaedeutic to life, and, like his hero More, he believed in the complementarity of the *vita contemplativa* (contemplative life) and the *vita activa* (active life). Despite his rather solemn and Rodinish mien, that of a deep thinker, Kenny was a robust and persuasive man, steeped in the public affairs of university life, and dedicated to protecting and furthering the causes of academia during a period of ever-increasing governmental intervention in academic freedoms.

Known for his integrity and administrative efficiency, Kenny was a steadying master of Balliol from 1978 to 1989, during a turbulent period, and he gave of his prodigious energy to other academic causes, from the project to computerise all of Oxford University's libraries, to helping to steer the troubled scheme to build a British Library to completion.

He gave extra tuition to Boris Johnson who still failed to achieve a first

One of his few failures in academe pertained to the ambition of Boris Johnson to leave Balliol with a first-class degree in 1987 after a somewhat chequered four years during which the undergraduate had tasted all that college life had to offer, including the notorious Bullingdon Club. Kenny acceded to Johnson's request for extra tuition before his viva, but the future prime minister still ended up with an upper second. The intellectual giant, unlike the peeved Johnson, was philosophical.

Anthony John Patrick Kenny was born in Liverpool in 1931 the only child of John Kenny, an engineer in the merchant navy, and Margaret (née Jones). He was a sickly baby who was not expected to survive beyond a few days. As a result, according to family lore, Anthony was baptised three times: by his grandmother who feared he might die before a priest could confer the sacrament, then by a priest who turned up at the hospital shortly afterwards, and then at a formal baptism in church. His mother later joked that her son would become "the best Catholic in Liverpool".

His parents separated when Anthony was a small child and then his father died early in the Second World War. Struggling with sadness and existential angst, he was inspired by his uncle, Alexander Jones, a Roman Catholic priest and biblical scholar, to pursue his own religious vocation. After leaving Upholland College in Lancashire, he trained for the priesthood from 1949 at the English College of the Gregorian University in Rome.

After ordination in 1955, he remained in Rome to continue his doctorate on "The philosophy of linguistic analysis and the language of religion". While still working on his doctorate for the Gregorian University, he registered for an Oxford DPhil at St Benet's Hall on "The intentionality of psychological verbs". While at Oxford, he was befriended by Elizabeth Anscombe, who introduced him to the works of Wittgenstein. Her seminars on Wittgenstein, he later wrote, were the most formative educational experience of his life, and exposure to Wittgenstein's ideas altered his modes of thought profoundly. He completed his Rome doctorate in 1958, and his Oxford doctorate in 1961.

Kenny became a curate in Liverpool in 1959, where he served in various parishes until 1963. Doubts about the logical justification of faith and about the intelligibility of the doctrine of transubstantiation of the Eucharist had plagued him at various stages of his religious studies. These came back to haunt him. Wittgenstein's philosophy undermined his confidence that religious experience could justify assertions of natural theology, and he came to doubt whether faith could be a substitute for proofs of the existence of God. His doubts could neither be resolved nor suppressed, but he clung on to his vocation. The coup de grace was delivered by the Archbishop of Liverpool, John Heenan (later Cardinal Heenan), who censured Kenny for writing in the Catholic Pictorial that Catholics could

Continued on page 52

Register

Elizabeth Wise

Cousin of Queen Elizabeth and 'wonderful mother' accused of manslaughter over the death of her brain-damaged daughter

On September 2, 1973, Elizabeth Wise, a great-great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria and a third cousin of Queen Elizabeth, gave birth to Emma Charlotte, a beautiful ash-blonde daughter with vivid blue eyes. "She was the baby I had longed for and prayed for," Wise said. Nine days later Emma was struck down by a viral infection. "First she went very sleepy. Then I could not waken her. In 24 hours she went into a deep coma," she said. Tests at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford revealed that she had serious brain damage caused by encephalitis.

Wise, who was living with friends near Newbury, in Berkshire, devoted every waking moment of the next nine months to Emma, hoping and praying that her condition would improve. "Her eyes and ears were normal, but there was no brain to interpret the messages they sent, or to tell the limbs what to do," she said. She recalled her daughter's incessant screams of pain because of the pressure in her skull. Feeding was desperately slow because the child had no control of her throat or stomach muscles and was vomiting constantly.

She consulted countless specialists and read every available book on disabled children. She also made arrangements to take her daughter to an institution for brain-damaged children in Australia, where she had once lived. But by the summer of 1974 she had to accept that Emma was never going to recover. In fact, she was more seriously ill than her mother had imagined, having lost three quarters of her brain to the infection. "It was heartbreaking to see her," she said.

On June 3, Wise gave Emma an overdose of Mandrax sleeping tablets crushed in milk. "I laid her on her face so she would not swallow her tongue. I wrapped her in a blanket so she would not get cold ... My intention was that she would die quickly, peacefully and painlessly," she said. Police who attended Battle Hospital in Reading found her cradling her dead daughter in her arms. "It was a happy relief. The only thing she really knew was pain," she said. "From her point of view, I feel what happened was for the best."

Appearing at Reading crown court four months later, a tearful Wise admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. There was much sympathy for her predicament, with the prosecution describing her as a "wonderful mother". Sentencing her to a year's probation, the judge Mr Justice Kenneth Jones said: "The doctors are genuinely puzzled as to how this child lived so long. I have little doubt it was your devotion which kept her alive. I regard this as an extreme case even among exceptional cases. In my judgment you have suffered enough for the wrong, according to the law, you did."

Days later she appeared on the BBC Radio programme *The World This Weekend* questioning whether doctors should artificially prolong the lives of severely disabled children. She also called for greater support for parents facing intolerable difficulties. "One never knows one has done the right thing," she said. "I think there should be more help for mothers in my situation. Possibly when children are so badly deformed and one knows they are severely handicapped, one should not make great efforts for them to live."

'The Queen has been very kind, sympathetic and understanding'

Wise's proximity to the royal family brought the private tragedy to the front pages, especially when she revealed that she had discussed the situation with Queen Elizabeth in whose courts the case against her was heard. "The Queen has been very kind, sympathetic and understanding. We are still good friends," she said. "She did not know anything about my daughter until after she died and my arrest was reported in the newspapers. But while I was on remand, we talked at some length."

Elizabeth Alice Abel Smith was born at Kensington Palace, London, in 1936, the youngest of three children of Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith DSO of the Royal Horse Guards and his wife, Princess May of Teck; her grandmother was Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, a grandchild of Queen Victoria. She is survived by her sister Anne, a Christian charity worker; her brother, Richard, predeceased her. A nephew, Ian Liddell-Grainger, was Conservative MP for Bridgwater and West Somerset until 2024. Her godmother was the Duchess of York (later Queen Elizabeth and eventually the Queen Mother) who, according to the Royal Musings blog, she regarded as a "dreadful gossip".

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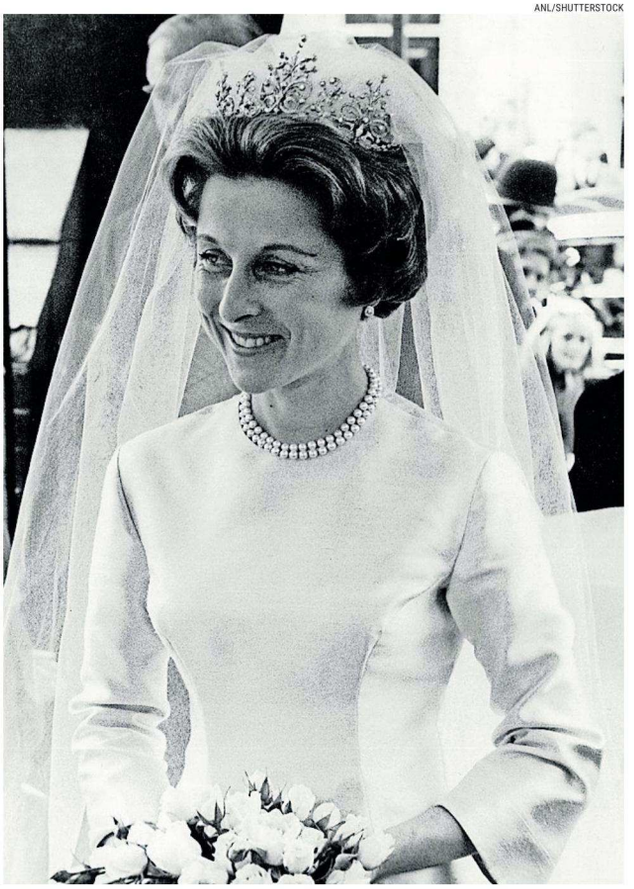


Wise married in London in 1965 with members of the royal family in attendance

The family became "war guests" in Ottawa thanks to her grandfather, the Earl of Athlone, being appointed governor-general of Canada in 1940. Elizabeth returned to England in July 1945 and attended the wedding of Prince Philip and Princess Elizabeth in 1947 and the coronation in 1953. From Heathfield School, Ascot, she went to a finishing school in Switzerland and was pictured in Country Life magazine in 1954. The Tatler and Bystander declared that she "made an outstanding success of her first season" as a debutante, though she had little love for formal presentation parties, telling one interviewer: "I think that sort of snob thing is rather a pity."

The "blonde and petite" Elizabeth worked at the Dr Barnardo's home in Tunbridge Wells before accompanying her parents to Australia in 1958 when her father was appointed governor of Queensland. There she gained a reputation as a free spirit, travelling around the country with her husky-blue cattle dog Sebastian. She learnt bush cooking, worked in a flower shop and became governess to two children on the Yarraloola sheep station, 850 miles north of Perth.

She returned to Brisbane to take tea on her grandmother's visit to the country in May 1959. However, when Princess Alexandra, an old school friend, sent word that three months later she too would be on a tour of Australia, Government House in Brisbane could only say that Elizabeth was "somewhere in the outback" where "we understand she is enjoying herself".

In 1965 she married Peter Wise, a P&O shipping executive, at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, having first sought permission of the Queen under the Royal Marriages Act of 1772. The ceremony was attended by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, as well as princesses Sybilla and Margaretha of Sweden. As the couple drove away from their reception at St James's Palace the boot of their Daimler opened a couple of inches and a hand appeared waving a white handkerchief. The guests roared with laughter, but the car was well down The Mall before the newlyweds realised anything was amiss. When they stopped to investigate, one of their 16-year-old guests emerged.

By the time of Emma's birth the couple had separated and after Wise's court appearance their marriage was dissolved. Thereafter she withdrew from public life though not family life, living latterly at Leyburn, in North Yorkshire, and continuing to exchange correspondence with Queen Elizabeth. Asked if she felt any guilt about killing her daughter, Wise replied: "No. It is such a personal problem. It is something one would never consider doing to anyone else, or to anyone else's child. I feel she is better off where she is. But I would never encourage anyone to do what I did."

Elizabeth Wise, cousin of Elizabeth II, was born on September 5, 1936. She died on August 2, 2026, aged 89

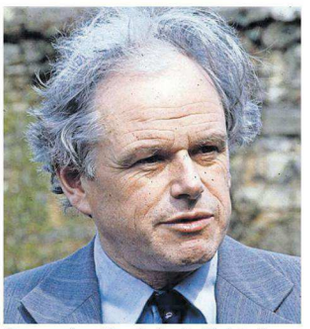
Continued from page 51 Sir Anthony Kenny

not in conscience work at a shipyard building a nuclear submarine. He left the priesthood in 1963.

The same year Kenny was appointed to a joint college lectureship by Trinity and Exeter Colleges, Oxford, during which time his Oxford doctoral dissertation was published as *Action, Emotion and the Will* in 1963, and received acclaim. He was elected to a tutorial fellowship at Balliol in 1964, where he remained for the next quarter of a century.

In 1965 he met Nancy Gayley, an American-born music teacher whom he married the following year. Balliol was quick to recognise his talents. In 1971-72 and again in 1976-77 he was senior tutor and in 1978 he was elected to succeed the Marxist historian Christopher Hill as master of Balliol. Relationships between the radical junior college and the pipe-smoking senior dons were somewhat fractured. Kenny would bring them back together and preside over the admission of women to Balliol.

As public funding was squeezed, Balliol, like other Oxford colleges, was placed under increasingly intolerable financial pressures. In 1984, to provide



Kenny raised funds for Balliol College

money for the funding of fellowships that would otherwise have been abolished, for overseas students whose fees had been trebled, and for the building of new accommodation for junior members, Kenny initiated the Dervorguilla Appeal for Balliol College, which raised £3 million — much of it from alienated alumni whom he had effectively brought back into the fold. In the same year he was appointed pro-vice-chancellor of Oxford University, in which capacity he would serve until 2001. As master of Balliol he struggled, with only moderate success, to mitigate the consequences of what he saw as governmental intrusions upon academic autonomy and of the subordination of university research to an economic agenda set by governmental authorities. As president of the British Academy from 1989 until 1993, he strove to ameliorate the consequences of government policy on graduate studies throughout the university system.

In 1985 he was appointed chairman of the Oxford University Libraries' Board, establishing a programme for setting up and computerising a unified catalogue of all Oxford libraries. He was at the same time a delegate and member of the finance committee of Oxford University Press (1986-93), and played a crucial role in obtaining funding for the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

His knighthood in 1992 was in recognition of his many services to the causes of higher education and the intellectual culture of Britain. From 1993 to 1996 he served as chairman of the British Library Board, taking over at a time of acute crisis in the building programme of the British Library. Under his guidance this fraught enterprise was completed to the benefit of scholars for centuries to come.

In 1989 Kenny retired from the mastership of Balliol and became the warden of Rhodes House and secretary to the Rhodes Trust, posts he occupied until 1999. He travelled the world in the service of the trust. By improving the selection procedures, he ensured a rise in the academic achievements of the Rhodes scholars in Oxford from close to the bottom of the Norrington Table to fourth from the top. He was instrumental in directing substantial Rhodes Trust funds to educational projects in post-apartheid South Africa and to a variety of projects in Oxford, most notably the new Institute of American Studies.

He wrote an admiring small biography of More, and a book on the 19th-century Balliol poets, Arthur Hugh Clough and Gerard Manley Hopkins, entitled *God and Two Poets* (1988). He greatly admired both, but felt a special sympathy for Clough and his crisis of faith. He also edited Clough's Oxford diaries. Mountain climbing of a not too hazardous nature, and later mountain walking with his beloved wife and two sons, were a favourite vacation pastime, and he edited a collection of writings on the subject: *Mountains: An Anthology* (1991). In addition, he wrote a two-volume autobiography, *A Path from Rome* (1985) and *A Life in Oxford* (1997). He is survived by Nancy and their sons, Charles and Robert.

In retirement he returned to the vexing, and for him deeply personal, question of philosophy of religion. *The Unknown God* (2004) is a book of essays that gives his final view on the questions of the existence of God and the expressibility of religious belief. In it he defended agnosticism against the strictures of atheism and the demands of faith alike.

He now argued that if there was a divine being, nothing non-metaphorical can be said about it, and no metaphor applying to such a being can be unpacked in non-metaphorical terms. Religious discourse, he argued, has to be understood in non-literal terms. Poetic terms, in other words.

Sir Anthony Kenny, philosopher, was born on March 16, 1931. He died on August 3, 2026, aged 95

Sir Robin Gill

Visionary television executive who prepared ITN for colour broadcasting

When Border Television launched on September 1, 1961, Robin Gill was the second face to appear after the presenter Mary Marquis. He took the opportunity to pledge "truly local programmes, reflecting your interests and way of life". It did not, however, stop him jumping ship only three years later to work for the demanding Lew Grade at Associated Television (ATV).

In December 1961 he fronted a second launch for Border, when the much delayed 229m (752ft) Selkirk transmitter came on stream so that southern Scottish viewers could finally watch the same programmes as their northern England counterparts. Gill controversially apologised to the lowlands viewers who until then had had to make do with "Newcastle, Glasgow and even Aberdeen television". Border was taken over by Granada in 2001 and is now part of ITV.

Gill navigated ATV through the Independent Television Authority 1968 franchise shake-up, playing a central role in winning the seven-day-a-week Midlands territory, then the most lucrative single contract. He promoted the international syndication of British television so successfully that ATV became the first television producer to win the Queen's Award to Industry for Export Achievement. He was also responsible for such programmes as the *This is Tom Jones* variety show and the Emmy-winning play *Male of the Species,* as well as the groundbreaking documentary *The Tribe that Hides from Man* filmed in the Amazon basin.

The tall, imposing Gill chaired Independent Television News (ITN) from 1968 to 1970, where he guided the news operation from the 405-line broadcasting system — the number of horizontal lines drawn across the screen on an old analogue TV picture — to 625 lines, the precondition for colour, backed by a new £1.5 million London studio complex.

From 1968 to 1969 he was on a little-known committee, chaired by Prince Philip, that supervised the making of the fly-on-the-wall television film *Royal Family,* afterwards locked away because Queen Elizabeth had second thoughts about how revealing it was. Although the committee had the right to censor what was shown, the director, Richard Cawston, gave little cause for concern and the committee's main role was to smooth access to the royal residences. Even so, the palace contacts proved valuable.

While Gill insisted that his relations with Grade were entirely amicable, in 1969 he quit

Gill devoted himself to philanthropy after leaving the commercial world and promoting education was his crowning achievement

ATV and television to start 1970 Trust, an early private-equity fund backed by City institutions that wanted an alternative to the Labour government's Industrial Reorganisation Corporation. Its best-known investment was the computer firm Hewlett-Packard.

The trust was wound up in 1993, and Gill left the commercial world altogether to devote himself to philanthropy. In 1990 he set up the Royal Anniversary Trust to organise the official celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession in 1992. The theme was education, which led to him running the Queen's Anniversary Prizes, now the Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Education, the highest national honour available to UK universities and colleges.

He set up the trust that organised the 40th anniversary of the Queen's reign

Nichola Tasker, the Royal Anniversary Trust's present chief executive, said Gill "was the original convener-in-chief, whose charm and conviction inspired support from government, philanthropists, the education sector and the royal household".

Robin Denys Gill was born in Hastings, New Zealand, in 1927, to Thomas Gill and Marjorie (née Butler). His father, a land and estate agent, was killed in the 1931 Napier earthquake after running into his office building in a vain attempt to rescue an employee.

Marjorie, who was born in England and studied at the Royal College of Music, returned to Britain with Robin and his elder brother, Harry. Initially she was a buyer at the Peter Robinson store on London's Oxford Circus but went on to open a dress shop, which she turned into a sandwich shop at the outbreak of the Second World War as she believed people would buy fewer clothes but would still need to eat. Harry served with the Intelligence Corps in Asia during the war, afterwards emigrating to Canada and going into commercial property.

Robin attended Fan Court (now Claremont Fan Court), a preparatory school in Surrey that had been founded by teachers of Christian Science, which Marjorie had been introduced to by a colleague at Peter Robinson. Robin remained a Christian Scientist for the rest of his life, and became a governor of the school.

After Christ's Hospital and then Dulwich College, which was hit by two V-1 flying bombs within a fortnight in summer 1944, he went up to Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1945 to read law but switched to PPE. He was a keen cricketer and won a rugby blue, and played in the 1947 and 1948 Varsity matches, when Oxford lost 6-0 and won 14-8 respectively. He scored a try as an openside flanker in the 1948 game.

In 1951 he married Mary Hope Alexander, whom he had met at Oxford. They founded the Robin and Mary Gill Charitable Trust, which supports education, community welfare and religious projects, particularly for the young and elderly, and had three sons: Stephen, a haiku poet who lectures at Kyoto University's engineering faculty; Richard, a retired company director, and Jonathan, who died in 1991 of natural causes. Mary died from a terminal disease five years earlier. On the North West Regional Advisory Council for Higher Education, Gill met Denise Spencer, the niece of the journalist Keith Waterhouse, and they married in 1991.

Gill's first job was with Unilever's Van den Berghs fats and oils arm, selling margarines: Stork, Summer County, Echo and Blue Band. In 1954 he moved to British International Paper, owned by Canadian International Paper, which indirectly took him into the media industry. The firm was an importer of newsprint for UK publications, including Cumberland Newspapers, led by John Burgess, Cumberland's deputy lieutenant. Burgess assembled a Border TV consortium that included Norman Leyland, the Brasenose bursar, who invested for the college. Leyland recommended Gill, who fittingly had family links to the Scottish borders.

At ATV he became a director of Stoll Moss Theatres, ITC and Pye Records, and was chairman of the Independent Television Companies Association from 1966 to 1967. He joined the boards of 1970 Trust's investee firms, including Ansvar Insurance, a charities specialist, and Hewlett-Packard. He later joined the national advisory board for higher education, the Oxford University Appointments Committee and IAESTE (UK), an association of academic, industrial and student national committees. He was president of the Brasenose Society and served on the college's fundraising advisory committee. Gill was appointed CVO in 1993, and KCVO on retiring in 2010, for his contribution to the Royal Anniversary Trust.

His interests included rugby, cricket, golf, swimming and windsurfing. He taught his grandchildren to fly-fish and sail, and was an accomplished needlepoint enthusiast, making cushions, bookmarks and footstool covers. He was a member of the Vincent's, St George's Hill and Free Foresters clubs.

Promoting education was Gill's crowning achievement, underscored in January this year when an exchange programme was launched between Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Education alumni and those from leading US academic institutions. "Robin had an amazing vision," said Dame Shelagh Legrave, a former Further Education Commissioner.

Sir Robin Gill, television executive, was born on October 7, 1927. He died on May 26, 2026, aged 98

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THE TIMES

Births, Marriages and Deaths

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I HAVE chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws. Psalm 119.30 (NIV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

EADON
On 25th July 2026 to Stephanie (née Jones) and James, a son, Oscar Anthony.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR W. D. AMBIDGE AND MISS H. V. CRUZ
The engagement is announced between William, elder son of Mr and Mrs Stephen Ambidge of Esher, and Holly, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Simon Cruz of Gibraltar.

MISS P. EVANS AND MR S. HALLATT
The engagement is announced between Polly, daughter of Mr and Mrs Alexander Evans of Chiswick, London, and Samuel, son of Mr and Mrs James Hallatt of Penn, Buckinghamshire.

MR I. W. M. TRICE AND MISS K. E. STANTON
The engagement is announced between Ivo, son of Jeremy and Victoria Trice of Kennington, London, and Katherine, daughter of Mark and Sara Stanton of Laverton, Gloucestershire.

MR C. SAMUELSON AND MISS L. THORNTON
The engagement is announced between Charlie, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Dominic Samuelson of Balsham, Cambridge, and Lucy, youngest daughter of Mrs Amanda Thornton of Thakeham, West Sussex and Mr James Thornton of Gstaad, Switzerland.

Deaths

ACKROYD (Robert) Peter MBE, DL. Peter, chairman of the Campaign for Wool and tireless campaigner for British wool textiles around the world, died suddenly of a heart attack on 18th July. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends and colleagues across the globe. A funeral service will be held at Bradford Cathedral, 1 Stott Hill, Bradford, BD1 4EH, at 10am on Tuesday 1st September. Family flowers only but donations in Peter's memory may be made to Crisis, crisis.org.uk/donate and the British Heart Foundation, bhf.org.uk

COXWELL Christopher Edward on 1st August 2026, aged 80, died peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family in Somerset West, South Africa. Much-loved husband, father and friend.

OGILVIE Sylvia (née Weir), aged 87, of St Andrews, passed away peacefully at St Andrews House Care Home on Monday 20th July 2026. A beloved wife of the late Gordon. A much-loved mother to Anna and Alastair, sister to Anna Weir, and granny to Benjamin and Ellie. Funeral service to be held at St Andrews Episcopal Church on Thursday 13th August at 10am. Interment thereafter at St Andrews Western Cemetery at 11.30am, to which all family and friends are respectfully invited. Family flowers only please, although donations may be given, if so desired, in aid of Alzheimer Scotland.

PELHAM The Lady Lucy (née Egerton) died peacefully at home on Saturday 1st August after a short illness, aged 88. Much-loved sister, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. No flowers please. Memorial service details from Diamond & Son 01590 672060.

ROSEN Hilary, peacefully on 22nd July 2026, aged 98. Wife of the late Anthony, much-loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Funeral in Winchester on Thursday 20th August at 2.30pm. Steels 01962 862333 or www.steelsfunerals.co.uk

WILLIAMS Anita Emily died on 29th July 2026, aged 90. Funeral service at Reading Crematorium on 17th August at 10am. Donations to NOMAD food bank may be made at: anita-emily-williams.muchloved.com or sent c/o Tomalin & Son, Henley.

YEOMAN Gordon, passed away peacefully on Friday 24th July 2026. Much-loved father to Gregor and Sarah and grandfather to Isabelle, Rory, Charlie, Florence and Edie. His integrity, warmth and humour will be missed by all who knew him. Funeral service at 11am on 13th August at St Columba's Church, Pont St, London SW1. Family flowers only. Donations to the Wooden Spoon Society.

Thanksgiving Services

LOMAX-SIMPSON A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Rosemary Lomax-Simpson will be held at 3pm on Friday 9th October at St James's Church Piccadilly and afterwards at the Royal Academy of Arts.

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Legal Notices

TRACSIS TRAVEL COMPENSATION SERVICES LIMITED
Company No: 10390176
TRACSIS RETAIL AND OPERATIONS LIMITED
Company No: 04225250
SAFETY INFORMATION SYSTEMS LIMITED
Company No: 02588404
(All in Members' Voluntary Liquidation)
Principal Trading Address: (All) Nexus, Discovery Way, Leeds, LS2 3AA

As Joint Liquidators of the Companies, we hereby give notice that we intend to make a final distribution to their creditors. The last date for proving is 22 September 2026 and creditors of the Companies should by that date send their full names and addresses and particulars of their debts or claims to me, Trevor Oates of Ernst & Young LLP, 12 Wellington Place, Leeds, LS1 4AP. In accordance with Rule 14.38(1)(c) of the Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016, we may thereafter make the proposed distribution without regard to the claim of any person in respect of adebt not yet proved.
Date of appointments: 28 July 2026. Joint Liquidators: Trevor Oates of Ernst & Young LLP, 12 Wellington Place, Leeds, LS1 4AP and Derek Hyslop of Ernst & Young LLP, Atria One, 144 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EX. For further details contact The Joint Liquidators, Tel: 0131 777 2300. Alternative contact: Laura Morrow.
Trevor Oates, Joint Liquidator

CLAIM NO. CR-2026-004009
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES COMPANIES COURT (ChD)
IN THE MATTER OF IG GROUP HOLDINGS PLC
- and -
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006
NOTICE OF COURT MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, by an Order dated 15 July 2026 made in the High Court of Justice of England and Wales in the above matters, the Court has given permission for a meeting (the "**Court Meeting**") to be convened of the holders of Scheme Shares (as defined in the scheme of arrangement referred to below) for the purpose of considering and, if thought fit, approving (with or without modification) a scheme of arrangement (the "**Scheme of Arrangement**") proposed to be made pursuant to Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 between IG Group Holdings plc (the "**Company**") and the holders of the Scheme Shares (as defined in the Scheme of Arrangement). The Court Meeting will be held at the offices of Freshfields LLP, 100 Bishopsgate, London EC2P 2SR at 10 a.m. (U.K. time) on 3 September 2026, at which place and time all holders of Scheme Shares are requested to attend.
Voting on the resolution to approve the Scheme of Arrangement will be by poll, which shall be conducted as the Chair of the Court Meeting may determine.
Holders of Scheme Shares entitled to attend and vote at the Court Meeting may vote in person at such meeting or they may, if they are entitled to do so, appoint another person or persons, whether a member of the Company or not, as their proxy or proxies, to exercise all or any of their rights to attend, speak and vote at the Court Meeting.
A holder of Scheme Shares who has not received a copy of the circular relating to the said Scheme of Arrangement can request the same from the Company or alternatively access an electronic version at www.iggroup.com/investor-relations/shareholder-information/general-meetings.
Dated this 7th day of August 2026
FRESHFIELDS LLP
100 Bishopsgate, London EC2P 2SR
Ref: OCSL
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7936 4000
SOLICITORS FOR THE COMPANY

NOTICE UNDER THE TRUSTEE ACT 1925
The TRP UK Retirement Plan (the "Plan")
Notice to Creditors and Beneficiaries under Section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925 that, following the bulk transfer of member benefits from the Plan to the L&G Mastertrust in May 2026, T. Rowe Price Retirement Plan Trustee Limited (the "Trustee") is winding-up the Plan.
Any employee or former employee of T. Rowe Price International Limited or Oakhill Advisors (U.K. Services) Limited who believes that he or she was a member of the Plan is requested to write to:
FAO Jodi West
Warwick Court
5 Paternoster Square
London
EC4M 7DX
to make a claim.
Claimants should provide their full name, any former names by which they may have been known, address, date of birth, NI number and details of when they worked for an employer named above. If any other person believes they have a claim against or an interest in the Plan, they are requested to write to the same address setting out full particulars of their claim. Please quote the Plan name in all correspondence.
All claims must be received by 9 October 2026. After this date, the Trustee will proceed to complete the wind-up of the Plan and distribute benefits for any remaining beneficiaries, having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have prior notice on the expiry of this notice. The Trustee shall not be liable to any person of whose claims and demands they have not had notice by the expiry date of this notice.
Any person who has been contacted by the Trustee at their current address or has already made a claim and received a response need not re-apply to the Trustee.
Issued on behalf of T. Rowe Price Retirement Plan Trustee Limited as the Trustee of the TRP UK Retirement Plan
Dated 7th August 2026

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38, 40, 42	~~£35~~	£23	£12
44, 46, 48	~~£37~~	£23	£14

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TOTAL

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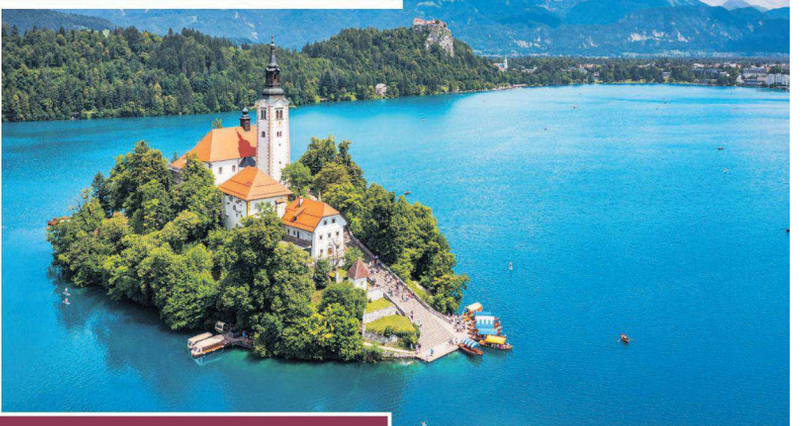

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Day 2 **Ljubljana, Slovenia**
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★Featured Excursion×: Lake Bled with Bee Farm Visit

Day 4 **Ljubljana, Slovenia – Venice, Italy**
Today, visit the Postojna Cave en route to Venice. Embark the 6★ ultra-luxurious ***S.S. La Venezia*** for your seven night all-inclusive voyage
★Featured Excursion×: Postojna Cave

Day 5 **Venice, Italy**
Cap the day off with a private once-in-a-lifetime experience at an after-hours lighting ceremony inside St. Mark's Basilica without the crowds

★Tour Highlight×: A walk in Venice with Doge's Palace visit. Plus, private after-hours visit to St. Mark's Basilica, exclusively for Uniworld Guests

Day 6 **Venice – Mazzorbo (Burano), Italy**
Start your morning in one of the Veneto region's two UNESCO World Heritage cities, Vicenza or Padua. In the afternoon, you'll have the opportunity to join a walk in Venice to meet a local gondola artisan. Finish today with a special Captain's welcome reception and dinner on board
★Featured Excursions×: Evening Stroll in Burano PLUS Vicenza with Teatro Olimpico OR Padua Walking Tour

Day 7 **Mazzorbo – Burano – Chioggia, Italy**
★Featured Excursions×: Torcello: Hidden Treasure of the Lagoon and Murano Glass Blowing Demonstration

Day 8 **Chioggia, Italy**
★Featured Excursions×: Chioggia market visit OR ★Let's Go: Biking Chioggia OR Bragozzo ride with Tastings at Ca'Zen OR A Noble country villa and Its Wines OR Palazzo Goldoni visit

Day 9 **Chioggia – Venice, Italy**
★Featured Excursions×: Po Delta Sailing OR Castello del Catajo Visit

Day 10 **Venice, Italy** (overnight)
You'll arrive in style at the Rialto Bridge by water taxi. A special Captain's Farewell Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you this evening
★Featured Excursions×: Do as the Locals Do: Venice walking tour OR Venice Walk with Gondola Artisans Visit OR Ca' Macana Mask Atelier OR Rowing Venice

Day 11 **Venice, Italy**
After breakfast, disembark and transfer to the airport for your return flight to London

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Today Showery rain in northern and western Scotland. Sunny spells elsewhere. Max 27C (81F), min 7C (45F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	14	C	2.0	4.7
Aberporth	16	PC	0.0	9.2
Anglesey	17	C	0.0	3.6
Aviemore	14	C	9.2	2.4
Barnstaple	19	PC	0.0	**
Bedford	19	C	0.0	**
Belfast	15	C	0.6	0.6
Birmingham	21	PC	0.0	**
Bournemouth	22	PC	0.0	5.8
Bridlington	16	C	0.0	**
Bristol	19	PC	0.0	10.2
Camborne	18	C	0.0	8.8
Cardiff	19	C	1.6	10.4
Edinburgh	16	C	1.6	2.5
Eskdalemuir	14	C	1.6	0.3
Glasgow	17	PC	0.2	0.0
Hereford	19	C	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	22	PC	0.0	8.3
Ipswich	19	C	0.0	5.7
Isle of Man	17	C	0.2	2.5
Isle of Wight	22	C	0.0	**
Jersey	20	PC	0.0	11.0
Keswick	15	C	0.2	**
Kinloss	14	**	15.0	3.6
Leeds	14	C	2.6	**
Lerwick	12	C	0.0	0.0
Leuchars	16	C	0.6	2.7
Lincoln	18	C	0.0	5.8
Liverpool	17	M	1.0	**
London	20	C	0.0	6.7
Lyneham	18	C	0.0	8.5
Manchester	17	C	2.6	3.2
Margate	21	C	0.0	7.9
Milford Haven	20	PC	0.0	**
Newcastle	13	D	0.8	**
Nottingham	18	C	0.0	4.4
Orkney	11	D	1.6	**
Oxford	20	C	0.0	**
Plymouth	21	C	0.0	**
Portland	19	PC	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	21	PC	0.0	**
Shoreham	21	PC	0.0	4.9
Shrewsbury	18	C	0.0	6.5
Snowdonia	14	R	1.0	**
Southend	20	C	0.0	8.7
South Uist	15	C	2.2	**
Stornoway	15	C	1.2	0.0
Tiree	15	C	1.4	0.0
Whitehaven	15	C	0.2	2.3
Wick	**	C	1.2	**
Yeovilton	20	PC	0.0	6.6

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	32	PC	Madeira	28	PC
Amsterdam	21	PC	Madrid	34	S
Athens	33	S	Malaga	28	S
Auckland	**	**	Mallorca	33	PC
Bahrain	43	S	Malta	34	PC
Bangkok	31	PC	Melbourne	13	B
Barbados	31	PC	Mexico City	24	PC
Barcelona	32	PC	Miami	29	**
Beijing	**	**	Milan	35	S
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	28	PC
Belgrade	37	S	Montreal	27	PC
Berlin	27	PC	Moscow	28	S
Bermuda	30	PC	Mumbai	**	**
Bordeaux	26	S	Munich	21	SH
Brussels	21	S	Nairobi	22	B
Bucharest	33	S	Naples	34	S
Budapest	38	S	New Orleans	32	T
Buenos Aires	**	**	New York	27	B
Cairo	33	S	Nice	30	PC
Calcutta	**	**	Nicosia	33	PC
Canberra	10	PC	Oslo	19	PC
Cape Town	15	B	Paris	23	S
Chicago	27	B	Perth	20	B
Copenhagen	23	PC	Prague	27	S
Corfu	36	PC	Reykjavik	13	R
Delhi	**	**	Riga	24	S
Dubai	45	S	Rio de Janeiro	31	S
Dublin	18	B	Riyadh	44	S
Faro	27	S	Rome	32	S
Florence	36	S	San Francisco	21	PC
Frankfurt	27	S	Santiago	15	B
Geneva	30	PC	São Paulo	27	S
Gibraltar	28	S	Seoul	35	PC
Helsinki	22	B	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	31	PC	Singapore	31	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	26	B
Istanbul	32	S	Stockholm	21	S
Jerusalem	33	PC	Sydney	15	S
Johannesburg	21	S	Tel Aviv	33	PC
Kuala Lumpur	32	PC	Tenerife	29	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	29	B
Lanzarote	28	PC	Vancouver	20	B
Las Palmas	29	PC	Venice	**	**
Lima	22	DU	Vienna	35	S
Lisbon	30	S	Warsaw	31	S
Los Angeles	24	PC	Washington	26	R
Luxor	39	S	Zurich	**	**

Five days ahead

Showers or longer spells at times in the north and west. Dry and very warm or hot in the southeast

Tomorrow
Outbreaks of rain in northern and western Scotland and Ireland, heavy at times. Dry with sunny spells in southeastern Scotland, England and Wales. Hot in southeast England.
Max 28C, min 8C

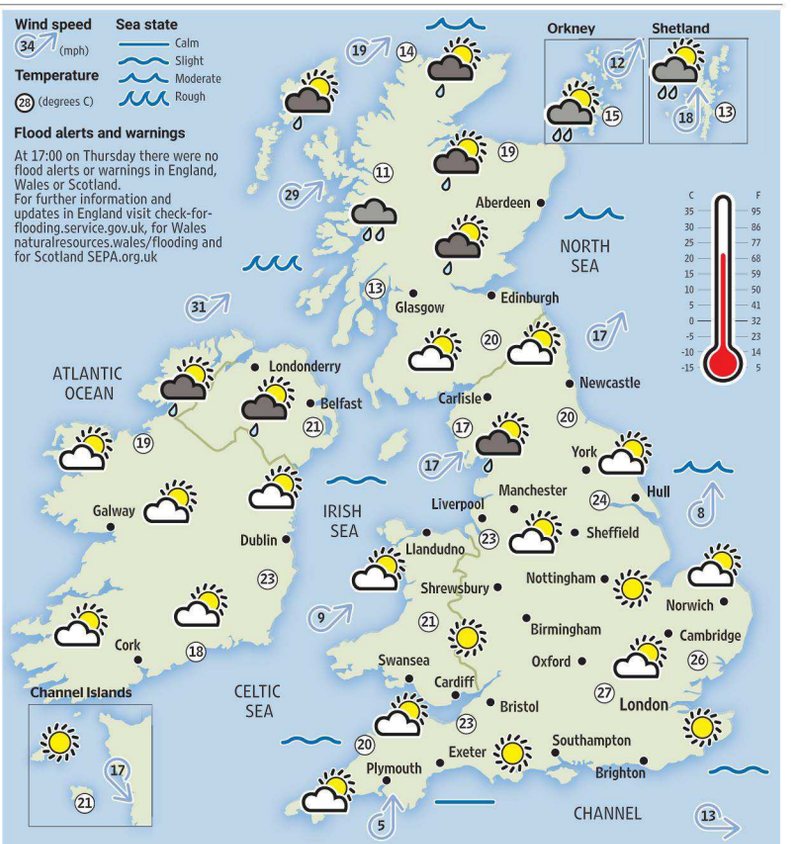
Sunday
Patchy rain in northern England, Wales and Ireland through the morning, turning brighter with showers in the afternoon. Dry in southern England. Sunshine and showers in Scotland.
Max 32C, min 6C

Monday
Showers or longer spells of rain in northern and western Scotland, Northern Ireland and the far northwest of England. Dry elsewhere with spells of sunshine.
Max 30C, min 6C

Tuesday
Cloudy in the far west of Ireland and the far northwest of Scotland with the chance of some light rain. Dry in other areas with plenty of sunshine.
Max 31C, min 10C

Wednesday
Partly cloudy in Ireland and western Scotland with the chance of a shower. Sunny spells with the chance of a thundery afternoon shower in Wales and northern England. Dry elsewhere.
Max 34C, min 11C

The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

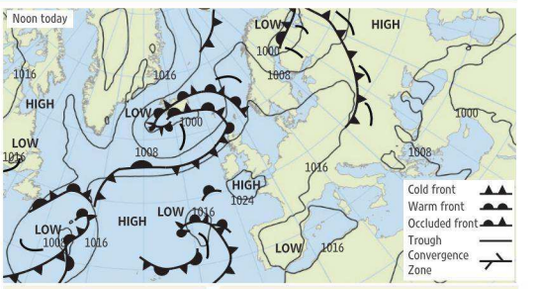


General situation: Showery rain in northern and western Scotland. A small chance of an isolated shower in northern England and the north of Ireland. Sunny spells elsewhere.
London, SE Eng, E Anglia, S Wales, SW Eng, Midlands, Channel Is, E Eng: A dry day with lengthy spells of sunshine. Light and variable winds. Maximum 27C (81F), minimum 7C (45F).
N Wales, NW Eng, Cen N Eng, IoM, Lake District, NE Eng: Sunny spells with the chance of an isolated shower, especially in northwestern England. Gentle to moderate west or southwesterly winds. Maximum 23C (73F), minimum 7C (45F).
N Ireland, Republic of Ireland: Sunny spells with the chance of a shower in the north. Dry with plenty of sunshine elsewhere. Gentle to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 23C (73F), minimum 9C (48F).
SW Scotland, Borders, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee: Sunny spells with the chance of an isolated shower in the morning. A cloudier afternoon with the chance of one or two showers, especially in Aberdeenshire and Fife. Gentle to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 20C (68F), minimum 10C (50F).
Glasgow, Cen Highland, NW Scotland, NE Scotland, Moray Firth, Argyll, N Isles: Mostly cloudy with outbreaks of showery rain. Moderate to strong southwesterly winds. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 11C (52F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	08:12	3.7	21:04	3.5
Avonmouth	01:24	10.8	13:52	10.5
Belfast	05:39	3.1	18:29	3.0
Cardiff	01:08	10.1	13:36	9.8
Devonport	--:--	--	12:33	4.5
Dover	05:28	5.6	18:07	5.7
Dublin	06:21	3.6	19:07	3.4
Falmouth	--:--	--	12:03	4.2
Greenock	06:40	3.1	19:08	3.0
Harwich	06:30	3.4	18:39	3.4
Holyhead	04:55	4.8	17:41	4.5
Hull	--:--	--	13:08	6.4
Leith	09:21	4.8	22:13	4.6
Liverpool	05:34	8.1	18:15	7.7
London Bridge	08:18	5.9	20:44	6.2
Lowestoft	04:15	2.2	16:21	2.4
Milford Haven	--:--	--	13:03	5.6
Morecambe	05:47	8.0	18:29	7.5
Newhaven	05:34	5.5	18:09	5.6
Newquay	--:--	--	12:01	5.4
Oban	--:--	--	12:28	3.0
Penzance	11:28	4.5	--:--	--
Portsmouth	06:13	4.0	18:53	4.1
Shoreham	05:36	5.1	18:14	5.2
Southampton	05:09	3.9	17:42	3.9
Swansea	--:--	--	13:04	7.5
Tees	10:32	4.8	23:23	4.5
Weymouth	--:--	--	13:23	1.4



Synoptic situation
A series of fronts associated with an area of low pressure centred to the south of Iceland will bring showery rain to northern and western Scotland and the north of Ireland. An area of high pressure situated over the Celtic Sea will bring a largely dry day with plenty of sunshine to England, Wales, southern Ireland and southeastern Scotland.

Highs and lows
24hrs to 5pm yesterday
Warmest: Thorney Island, West Sussex, 24.7C
Coldest: Cairngorm, 1.9C
Wettest: Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire, 45.2mm
Sunniest: Jersey, 11.0hrs*

Sun and moon
For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.33
Sun sets: 20.38
Moon rises: 23.45
Moon sets: 17.57 Sat
New moon: August 12

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:39-04:51
Belfast	21:43-05:17
Birmingham	21:19-05:09
Cardiff	21:20-05:17
Exeter	21:19-05:21
Glasgow	21:42-05:05
Liverpool	21:27-05:10
London	21:08-05:05
Manchester	21:24-05:06
Newcastle	21:27-04:58
Norwich	21:07-04:55
Penzance	21:25-05:31
Sheffield	21:20-05:04

Weather Eye
Paul Simons

July had record heat and drought across England and Wales, and there was also another remarkable feature of the weather — it was the sunniest July on record in England and Wales. In fact, it was also the sunniest of any month of the year, an astonishing statistic.

The sun blazed down in largely blue skies, very often with hardly a wisp of cloud. This raises a question which many parents must dread from their children, "What makes the sky blue?"

Strangely, sunlight is actually white, a mixture of all the colours of the spectrum. But as the light passes through the Earth's atmosphere it becomes scattered by tiny particles in the air and even by the gas molecules of the air itself. When the atmosphere is very clean, the air only scatters the short wavelengths of light, giving blue and violet colours, while the other colours of the spectrum pass straight through without hindrance. As for the violet colour, that remains invisible to us because our eyes are not sensitive enough to see violet in the sky.

And what about the yellow, orange and red in the sky at dawn and sunset? That is when the sun is low in the sky and the sunlight has to travel through a far thicker slice of atmosphere. The blue light becomes so scattered that only the longer wavelengths of light pass through, giving the yellow, orange and red colours.

Interestingly, the blueness of the sky varies according to location. So, for example, the sky in the Greek islands is famously a deep blue, but skies over much of Europe are paler because of more dust particles and pollution, which scatters not only the blue light but also many of the other wavelengths of the spectrum, tending to make the sky appear a milky shade of blue.

On the other hand, from the tops of mountains the sky appears to be a deep blue because there is far less atmosphere there, and less scattering. Eventually, if you climb higher, all the blues in the sky disappear leaving only the blackness of space itself.

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Sport

Muirhead aims for Olympic gold at 40

Former Team GB skip retired in 2022 after reaching 'rock bottom' but is ready to return, writes **Elgan Alderman**

LILLIAN SUWANRUMPHA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Muirhead initially had "zero regrets" about her decision to retire four years ago but will be competing in the mixed doubles

Eve Muirhead is back in the house. The skip of the 2022 Olympic women's curling champions has reversed her retirement with a view to winning a second gold in 2030, in mixed doubles with Bobby Lammie.

Muirhead became only the third person, after Willie Jackson and Rhona Martin, to lead a British rink to Olympic victory. Team GB's only gold in Beijing marked an astonishing turnaround for Muirhead, who had reached "rock bottom" in the build-up to the Games.

In her autobiography, *Ice Queen*, Muirhead explained how eighth place at the 2021 World Championships in Canada made her uncharacteristically candid with a doctor, on speakerphone, in her car, at Forthview Golf Range. "I was at my lowest ebb, unrecognisable from the athlete talked about as a generational talent," Muirhead wrote. She ended her prologue with her assertion to the doctor that she "didn't want to be here".

That result in Canada left Team GB at risk of not qualifying for Beijing. Muirhead's team had to come through a second event in the Netherlands in December. They did so and two months later they were Olympic champions. Given how Muirhead had felt nine months earlier, the final was a relief and a blur. She continued competing, becoming world mixed doubles champion with Lammie, and retired that summer at 32. "I knew it was by far the right thing to do," Muirhead, now 36, says. "I have zero regrets in retiring."

It was not quite Steve Redgrave granting the nation permission to shoot him if they saw him in a boat, only to win a sheepish fifth Olympic gold in Sydney. Muirhead sat out one cycle, though she was in Milano Cortina this year as Team GB's chef de mission. That role sounds like a shady side character in a James Bond novel, but involves tasks like letting the Olympic village know the sink is leaking in the figure skaters' room.

Muirhead was on hand and in charge to witness Team GB's most golden Winter Olympics, with Matt Weston a double skeleton champion (singles, and doubles with Tabitha Stoecker) supported by the snowboarding team of Charlotte Bankes and Huw Nightingale. "I'm an expert now at skeleton," Muirhead says. "I was there when they won the gold. It was phenomenal."

From the brink to the rink, Muirhead is an athlete again, dragged back to bonspiel life, her competitive edge rekindled. She has relocated from Scotland to England and will be able to train "decentralised", as well as at the National Curling Academy in Stirling. Without the Flower Bowl in Preston — an entertainment centre that offers crazy golf, shuffleboard and tenpin bowling as well as curling — Muirhead's return would not have been viable.

In retirement, Muirhead has been around curling but has barely played. "I've played the odd club game, the odd charity event, but in the grand scheme of things, not much at all, which is absolutely fine with me," she says. "My body needed a break."

That break has come in the form of Hyrox. A series of indoor fitness competitions that last over an hour, plus a penchant for marathons, doesn't seem like much of a break, but it means Muirhead is fitter than ever.

She always was a woman of many talents: moving to England has weakened her prowess as a formerly scratch handicapper in golf, and she hasn't played bagpipes (she has competed at world championships) since her brother's wedding in October.

Relocation has also taken her away from St Johnstone FC, though she keeps tabs on their results. Last season the Saints won the Championship and they beat Kilmarnock 4-3 last weekend in the opening round of the Premiership. Of more interest to Muirhead is the possibility of the chairman, Adam Webb, financing a new ice arena on the club's site at McDiarmid Park, after the facility at Dewars Centre was put under threat of closure.

As Britain endures another heatwave, it seems incongruous to be discussing curling, a sport most Britons believe exists on BBC for a week in February every four years. The World Curling Tour has a men's event in Switzerland next week. The national championships are in October, so Muirhead will quickly be able to test herself in a year that is not about "chasing results and numbers".

There is also the Rock League, which held its inaugural season in Toronto in April. Muirhead is the general manager of Team Alpine. Could she be more? "I actually had a funny message from Alina Pätz, she's the captain of the team," Muirhead says. "She was like, 'Manager/player?'"

As she announced her return in a string of media engagements, Muirhead's Olympic success was never far from a TV montage in the BBC studios. They are a reminder of the past, and a spur for 2030. "Winning the Olympic Games is something that it's very hard to see what it's like until you've experienced it," Muirhead says. "It is something, of course, you would give anything to do again. Me being as determined, as competitive as I am, that's my ultimate goal.

"I'm stepping into British curling when it's at a very, very high standard. The calibre of players within British curling just now is amazing. European, world champions, Olympic medallists. So it's going to be tough for me, but that's the way I want it."

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Racing Sport

Haydock Park
Rob Wright

5.43 Ancestor **7.28** Arthurian
6.18 Edward Sexton **8.03** Silver Sovereign
6.53 Dance A Jig (nap) **8.38** Montezin

Going: good
Draw: 7f-1m, low numbers best **Racing TV**

5.43 Novice Stakes (£7,020: 1m 2f) (3)

1 (3) 41 **ANCESTOR** 30 (D) W Haggas 3-9-11 **T Marquand**
2 (1) 5-5 **GOLDEN CAVIAR** 8 E Dunlop 3-9-4 **H Crouch**
3 (2) 43 **TROPICAL SANDS** 57 E Walker 3-8-13 **C Lee**

4-6 Ancestor, 7-4 Tropical Sands, 8-1 Golden Caviar.

Rob Wright's choice: Ancestor won in good style at Yarmouth; ought to follow up here **Danger** Tropical Sands

6.18 Handicap (£4,222: 1m 6f) (8)

1 (5) 6-601 **DREAM HARDER** 8 (P,T) M Loughnane 7-11-2(4ex) **J Loughnane (7)**
2 (8) 20402 **FAST FRED** 27 (P,BF) Phillip Makin 6-11-2 **Miss P Brown (3)**
3 (2) 30532 **CAPH STAR** 15 (T) M Rimell 7-11-1 **H Rimell (7)**
4 (3) 13310 **CLANSMAN** 41 (D) L Bailey 8-10-12 **Miss A Collier**
5 (7) 10533 **MADE ALL** J20 (T,BF) S England 5-10-11 **Rebecca Hitchen (5)**
6 (6) -0622 **ARRANGE** 7 (C,D) M Todhunter 8-10-10 **Eireann Cagney**
7 (1) 00-06 **EDWARD SEXTON** 109 G & J Moore 6-10-6 **D Dunsdon**
8 (4) 22624 **HAVACHOC** 31 (P,BF) P Morris 4-9-13 **L Murphy (5)**

7-2 Edward Sexton, 4-1 Dream Harder, 5-1 Fast Fred, Arrange, 11-2 Caph Star, 6-1 Made All, 12-1 Havachoc, 16-1 Clansman.

Wright choice: Edward Sexton looks well-in and is sure to relish this stiffer test **Dangers** Havachoc, Dream Harder

6.53 Nursery (2-Y-O: £7,731: 5f) (6)

1 (5) 106 **GOD GIVEN TALENT** 21 W Haggas 9-9 **T Marquand**
2 (4) 220 **DANCE A JIG** 51 R Beckett 9-9 **H Crouch**
3 (3) 62120 **JAIJAI** 7 (D) R Hannon 9-5 **S M Levey**
4 (6) 42310 **UNDERCOVER AFFAIR** 9 (D) P Evans 9-3 **R Kavanagh (3)**
5 (1) 10 **ROTELLE** 13 (D) C Fellowes 8-13 **P Bradley**
6 (2) 262 **CASINO STAR** 27 K R Burke 8-12 **C Lee**

2-1 God Given Talent, 5-2 Casino Star, 4-1 Dance A Jig, 13-2 Rotelle, 8-1 Undercover Affair, 14-1 Jaijai.

Wright choice: Dance A Jig can bounce back from a below-par run in the Windsor Castle at Ascot **Danger** Rotelle

7.28 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 1m) (6)

1 (2) 6 **ARTHURIAN** 21 A Balding 9-7 **C Hutchinson**
2 (4) **BURNING UP** K R Burke 9-7 **C Lee**
3 (3) **GOLDEN FALCON** S bin Suroor 9-7 **P Bradley**
4 (6) **KING KENNY** A Brittain 9-7 **H Russell**
5 (1) 06 **PARRY GREEN** 13 L Williamson 9-7 **S B Kirrane**
6 (5) **SKYLAR** C Johnston 9-7 **H Crouch**

2-1 Arthurian, 11-4 Burning Up, 3-1 Golden Falcon, 5-1 Skylar, 8-1 King Kenny, 150-1 Parry Green.

Wright choice: Arthurian showed plenty of ability when a close sixth on his debut at Newbury **Danger** Burning Up

8.03 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 7f) (9)

1 (7) 1 **SYNDICALE** 17 (D) K R Burke 9-6 **C Lee**
2 (1) **REMEMBER THE SHOW** E Walker 9-2 **T Marquand**
3 (6) **SCRAPPETALENE** C Johnston 9-2 **J Hart**
4 (3) **SEA ANGIE RUN** Tom Clover 9-2 **J Mitchell**
5 (5) 6 **EXPENSIVE LUXURY** 21 K R Burke 8-13 **S M Levey**
6 (9) 5 **FRESHWATER** 16 (BF) D O'Meara 8-13 **M Winn**
7 (8) 2 **SILVER SOVEREIGN** 17 C Cox 8-13 **H Crouch**
8 (2) 0 **TRADITTION** 16 T Easterby 8-13 **S B Kirrane**
9 (4) 324 **APHRA BEHN** 25 (BF) R Beckett 8-10 **R Clutterbuck**

5-2 Silver Sovereign, 11-4 Syndicale, Aphra Behn, 10-1 Remember The Show, Scrappetalene, 14-1 Sea Angie Run, 16-1 Freshwater, 25-1 others.

Wright choice: Silver Sovereign was a promising second in a decent maiden at Salisbury **Dangers** Aphra Behn, Syndicale

8.38 Handicap (£4,449: 7f) (11)

1 (5) -3311 **DISTINCT SPIRIT** 6 (D) D & C Kubler 6-10-0(5ex) **E Nader**
2 (4) 21212 **FARANDAWAY** 15 (D) G Tuer 4-9-9 **O Stammers**
3 (2) 04405 **MONTEZIN** 13 (P,T) A Brittain 4-9-8 **H Russell**
4 (10) 04106 **CRIMINAL SHORE** 19 (V) D O'Meara 4-9-8 **M Winn**
5 (8) 0-633 **RAFFLES ANGEL** 15 (C) Jack Jones 5-9-7 **J Hart**
6 (11) 3-606 **POTOMAC RIVER** 29 T Kent 4-9-6 **J Mitchell**
7 (3) 11014 **EVOCATIVE SPARK** 69 (V,BF,D) J Riches 7-9-6 **S B Kirrane**
8 (7) 1-641 **TOKYO JOE** 24 (D) E Walker 4-9-5 **T Marquand**
9 (9) 41312 **INVINCIBLE RUBY** 14 (D) I Jardine 4-9-3 **H Crouch**
10 (1) -0316 **MAGIC MUSIC** 42 (BF,D) Steph Hollinshead 4-9-2 **C Lee**
11 (6) 66052 **BAJAN BANDIT** 31 (V,CD) P Morris 6-8-9 **R Kavanagh (3)**

3-1 Distinct Spirit, 7-2 Tokyo Joe, 6-1 Invincible Ruby, 13-2 Farandaway, 8-1 Raffles Angel, 10-1 Bajan Bandit, 14-1 Montezin, Evocative Spark.

Wright choice: Montezin drops in trip after failing to last home when fifth at York **Dangers** Tokyo Joe, Invincible Ruby

Musselburgh
Rob Wright

1.50 Falcon Nine **3.50** Woohoo
2.20 Minister Man (nb) **4.24** Much
2.50 Bigalo **4.54** Misemerald
3.20 Misunderstood

Going: good
Draw: 5f, high numbers best **Racing TV**

1.50 Handicap (£3,664: 1m 1f) (7)

1 (7) 24022 **FALCON NINE** 11 (B,CD) I Jardine 6-9-9 **K Shoemark**
2 (1) 43021 **SAMRA STAR** 11 (H,D) Miss L Perratt 5-9-9(5ex) **P Mulrennan**
3 (5) 42260 **TOY SOLDIER** 18 (B,C) L Russell & M Scudamore 4-9-6 **Lexie Clarkson (7)**
4 (4) 11P02 **GEMINI MAN** 7 (BF,C,D) I Jardine 8-9-4 **J Nicholls (3)**
5 (6) 06005 **MINERS GAMBLE** 13 (T,CD) B Ellison 5-9-3 **L Morris**
6 (3) 03410 **APPROACHING DAWN** 11 (C) J Goldie 6-9-2 **Lauren Young (5)**
7 (2) /40-6 **LIBERTY LOOMING** 7 (P) A Nicol 5-8-10 **JP Sullivan**

5-2 Falcon Nine, 3-1 Samra Star, 100-30 Gemini Man, 7-1 Miners Gamble, 8-1 Toy Soldier, Approaching Dawn, 33-1 Liberty Looming.

2.20 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £12,885: 5f) (5)

1 (3) 11 **BARNABY RUDGE** 41 (H,D) J Fanshawe 9-12 **D Muscutt**
2 (5) 2 **MINSTER MAN** 15 R Cowell 9-4 **P Mulrennan**
3 (4) 46 **MY MATE FITZ** 27 K Ryan 9-4 **T Eaves**
4 (1) **SOD HALL LANE** D Carroll 9-4 **Z Wheatley**
5 (2) 42 **FAITH IN FLORENCE** 21 (BF) E Walker 8-13 **K Shoemark**

6-4 Faith In Florence, 2-1 Barnaby Rudge, 7-2 Minster Man, 10-1 Sod Hall Lane, 16-1 My Mate Fitz.

2.50 Handicap (2-Y-O: £7,851: 7f) (5)

1 (3) 100 **EXTENDED ORDER** 21 E J-Houghton 9-9 **D Muscutt**
2 (1) 60022 **BIGALO** 7 (BF) Roger Fell 9-3 **Joanna Mason**
3 (4) 64201 **BLUESTONE LADY** 7 (B,CD) Phillip Makin 9-3(6ex) **J Nicholls (3)**
4 (2) 66123 **AMANTHA** 7 (CD) B Ellison 8-12 **L Morris**
5 (5) 363 **BELLA LUCIA** 15 G Tutty 8-11 **W Pyle**

7-4 Bigalo, 11-4 Bluestone Lady, 4-1 Bella Lucia, 11-2 Amantha, 7-1 Extended Order.

3.20 Handicap (£7,851: 7f) (11)

1 (9) 32441 **JONNY CONCRETE** 14 (P,CD) I Jardine 5-9-12 **J Nicholls (3)**
2 (3) 00400 **GWEEDORE** 32 (B,CD) K Scott 9-9-11 **T Eaves**
3 (6) 50600 **MISUNDERSTOOD** 14 (H,D) D O'Meara 4-9-11 **D Tudhope**
4 (11) 3-11 **EAGLE BAY** 41 (D) H Bethell 3-9-10 **S D Bowen**
5 (7) 10-10 **PASSING THOUGHT** 49 (D) E Walker 3-9-10 **K Shoemark**
6 (4) 5-020 **VIXEY** 10 (D) S G West 6-9-10 **A Brookes**
7 (5) -2604 **AUGUSTUS GLOOP** 21 J Fanshawe 3-9-7 **D Muscutt**
8 (10) -0300 **ONE NIGHT THUNDER** 13 (H,D) G Tutty 6-9-6 **O McSweeney**
9 (2) 10015 **NATIVE HONEY** 11 (D) J Goldie 4-9-3 **P Mulrennan**
10 (8) -1630 **ZARVALI** 28 (D) Roger Fell 3-9-3 **Joanna Mason**
11 (1) 13420 **ASHEN** 14 (D) J Goldie 4-8-12 **Lauren Young (5)**

5-4 Eagle Bay, 5-1 Jonny Concrete, 6-1 Passing Thought, 8-1 Vixey, 10-1 Augustus Gloop, 14-1 Native Honey, 16-1 Misunderstood, 20-1 Ashen.

3.50 Handicap (£7,851: 5f) (6)

1 (4) 0-033 **JER BATT** 7 (P,CD) D & N Barron 6-10-0 **W Pyle**
2 (6) 25463 **TIVA** 6 (T,V,D) D O'Meara 4-9-11 **D Tudhope**
3 (5) 20532 **MONTEZUMA** 7 (H,BF,CD) J Goldie 4-9-10 **P Mulrennan**
4 (1) 10-40 **BIG FUN** 68 (CD) K Ryan 3-9-9 **T Eaves**
5 (3) 02222 **WOOHOO** 10 (CD) J Goldie 5-9-2 **Lauren Young (5)**
6 (2) 40065 **ECCLEFECHAN** 21 J Ryan 3-8-8 **L Morris**

2-1 Woohoo, 11-4 Montezuma, 100-30 Jer Batt, 13-2 Tiva, 15-2 Big Fun, 20-1 Ecclefechan.

4.24 Handicap (£5,234: 1m 5f) (7)

1 (5) 4-311 **ROC DE FER** 7 Sir M Prescott 3-10-1(12ex) **L Morris**
2 (3) 06254 **SIMPLE STAR** 7 (T,C) Gary Rutherford 8-9-13 **J Nicholls (3)**
3 (2) 03253 **SURE AND STEDFAST** 27 Ewan Whillans 4-9-13 **G Fairley**
4 (6) -1250 **TOMMY'S PROMISE** 126 J Ryan 5-9-11 **T Eaves**
5 (7) 0-013 **ALNAYEF** 22 (BF,D) J Goldie 5-9-10 **P Mulrennan**
6 (1) 5-415 **WILLOW WOOD** 20 E Walker 3-9-6 **K Shoemark**
7 (4) 0042 **MUCH** 7 (T) J Fanshawe 3-9-4 **D Muscutt**

4-7 Roc De Fer, 13-2 Sure And Stedfast, 15-2 Much, 12-1 Willow Wood, 14-1 Simple Star, 16-1 Tommy's Promise, Alnayef.

4.54 Handicap (£3,664: 7f) (6)

1 (1) 11304 **FILEY BEACH** 13 (P,CD) R Carr 5-9-9 **JP Sullivan**
2 (3) 3-000 **KEEP ME STABLE** 18 (CD) Miss L Perratt 6-9-8 **O McSweeney**
3 (2) 00050 **MAUI BREEZE** 34 (P) W Storey 4-9-3 **G Fairley**
4 (4) 32461 **MONHAMMER** 7 (CD) Miss L Perratt 8-9-2(4ex) **P Mulrennan**
5 (6) -6034 **CHLOE'S COURAGE** 10 (D) J Ryan 4-9-1 **L Morris**
6 (5) 62342 **MISEMERALD** 7 (P,D) P Kirby 5-8-10 **A Brookes**

7-4 Monhammer, 2-1 Misemerald, 5-1 Chloe's Courage, 6-1 Filey Beach, 12-1 Maui Breeze, 20-1 Keep Me Stable.

Thirsk
Rob Wright

2.10 Tarlac **3.40** Qila
2.40 My Maria **4.10** Wahdan
3.10 Gerry's Darling **4.40** Maximum Velocity

Going: good, good to firm in places
Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best **Racing TV**

2.10 Classified Stakes (£3,140: 6f) (9)

1 (1) 0-066 **DRISH SAMPHIRE** 7 L Mullaney 4-9-9 **C Horgan**
2 (3) 54330 **GOLDEN PROSPERITY** 9 (P,CD) T Coyle & K Wood 7-9-9 **J Dickson (3)**
3 (6) 46604 **HURSTWOOD** 20 (D) P Niven 9-9-9 **E Tindall**
4 (8) 02054 **MISTER SKY BLUE** 16 (D) G Tutty 4-9-9 **C Whiteley**
5 (4) 06005 **MRS TRUMP** 9 (BF,CD) P Midgley 6-9-9 **L Wright**
6 (9) 26040 **NEWYORKSTATEOFMIND** 32 (B,D) R Carr 9-9-9 **Taryn Langley**
7 (5) 00042 **TARLAC** 22 (D) K Scott 4-9-9 **Olivia Haines (3)**
8 (2) 06000 **THANK THE LORD** 105 (V,D) Mr W G Harrison 7-9-9 **S Farmer**
9 (7) 26552 **TICKETS** 42 (T,BF,D) P Neville 7-9-9 **H Vigors (3)**

100-30 Tarlac, 7-2 Tickets, 9-2 Mrs Trump, 6-1 Mister Sky Blue, 7-1 Golden Prosperity, Hurstwood, 16-1 others.

2.40 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 5f) (13)

1 (8) **ESTELLA HAVISHAM** K R Burke 9-2 **S James**
2 (6) 3 **MOLLISHA** 13 B Ellison 9-2 **B Robinson**
3 (10) 4322 **MY MARIA** 9 (P) A Watson 9-2 **C Beasley**
4 (12) 024 **SHANIKO** 48 (H) Craig Lidster 9-2 **Kaiya Fraser**
5 (3) 436 **TIME GLORY** 30 K Ryan 9-2 **K Stott**
6 (2) 52 **INGLEWOOD** 30 J Camacho 8-13 **R Sexton**
7 (4) 3 **PROSPERITY ANGEL** 23 B Haslam 8-13 **A Mullen**
8 (5) **TAKEASELFIE** R & P Fahey 8-13 **W Fentiman (3)**
9 (9) 4335 **TRAVELLERS GIRL** 14 Roger Fell 8-13 **Oisin Orr**
10 (7) 5 **VERUCA SALT** 21 (T) J Fanshawe 8-13 **J Peate**
11 (13) **BASMAAH** B Haslam 8-10 **H Vigors (5)**
12 (1) 45 **DOROTHEA HOPE** 10 (BF) T Easterby 8-10 **D Fentiman**
13 (11) 3 **PURRISTA** 10 G Tutty 8-10 **Ashley Lewis (3)**

7-2 Estella Havisham, 4-1 My Maria, 11-2 Mollisha, 8-1 Inglewood, Time Glory, 10-1 Takeaselfie, 12-1 Dorothea Hope, Travellers Girl.

3.10 Nursery (2-Y-O: £3,926: 7f) (7)

1 (1) 6501 **BYMIDDAYTOMORROW** 11 (D) E Walker 10-1(6ex) **Ashley Lewis (3)**
2 (5) 0021 **GERRY'S DARLING** 7 (D) Roger Fell 9-8(6ex) **K Stott**
3 (7) 32 **LOVE TANYA** 14 E Bethell 9-6 **O Orr**
4 (6) 533 **CONSULTATION** 42 J Fanshawe 9-5 **Doubtful**
5 (4) 500 **BONJOUR BELLE** 19 B Ellison 8-6 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
6 (3) 36505 **PRISCILLA'S HOPE** 31 P McBride 8-6 **A Mullen**
7 (2) 00433 **SPIRIT OF MARY** 14 B Haslam 8-2 **E Tindall (5)**

7-4 Gerry's Darling, 2-1 Bymiddaytomorrow, 9-2 Love Tanya, 10-1 Bonjour Belle, Spirit Of Mary, 14-1 Priscilla's Hope.

3.40 Handicap (£3,926: 5f) (6)

1 (1) 51414 **J STREET** 13 (D) M & D Easterby 4-9-9 **B Garritty**
2 (3) -3112 **MILITARY GIRL** 52 (BF,D) M Dods 4-9-8 **C Beasley**
3 (5) 03211 **AZUINTHEJUNGLE** 10 (D) N Tinkler 4-9-8(5ex) **A Jary (3)**
4 (6) 06000 **VINCE L'AMOUR** 13 (B,T,D) T Easterby 5-9-7 **D Allan**
5 (2) 54-20 **QILA** 59 (W,T) B Ellison 3-9-4 **R Robinson**
6 (4) 31506 **GLORY FIGHTER** 57 (CD) P Midgley 10-9-4 **D Nolan**

2-1 Military Girl, 9-4 J Street, 5-2 Azuinthejungle, 10-1 Glory Fighter, 12-1 Qila, 25-1 Vince L'Amour.

4.10 Handicap (£9,720: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (2) 0-022 **MASTER VINTNER** 36 (B,BF,D) R Beckett 4-9-9 **E Greatrex**
2 (5) -0420 **MAJESTIC** 28 J Channon 8-9-6 **C Beasley**
3 (4) -0663 **WAHDAN** 13 (P) T Easterby 5-9-5 **D Allan**
4 (1) 5410- **SUDU** 373 (H,D) R Varian 4-9-3 **R Dawson**
5 (3) 1-443 **WANDERLUST** 43 J Jardine 4-9-1 **A Mullen**
6 (6) 0/420 **GOLDEN WEST** 28 T Easterby 5-8-10 **D Fentiman**

11-8 Master Vintner, 4-1 Sudu, 9-2 Wanderlust, 6-1 Wahdan, 8-1 Majestic, 14-1 Golden West.

4.40 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,140: 6f) (11)

1 (7) 01032 **MAXIMUM VELOCITY** 16 (P) N Tinkler 9-9 **F McManoman**
2 (10) 04445 **YELLOW DIAMONDS** 22 J Camacho 9-8 **R Sexton**
3 (5) -0222 **GREAT PROFIT** 11 Mr W G Harrison 9-7 **B McHugh**
4 (2) 20306 **OVERBUDGET** 42 M Appleby 9-7 **A Mullen**
5 (8) -6560 **REAL JACK** 48 M Dods 9-6 **C Beasley**
6 (11) -0035 **SOUL WARRIOR** 18 (D) N Tinkler 9-2 **A Jary (3)**
7 (9) 56-60 **MARE OF LONDON** 14 M Walford 9-1 **S James**
8 (4) -0306 **HELLCAT** 31 R Burdon 8-12 **A Egan (7)**
9 (6) 01244 **LOPE Y LINDA** 16 T Easterby 8-12 **D Allan**
10 (1) -1435 **LIQUID COOLED** 21 (D) B Haslam 8-10 **H Vigors (5)**
11 (3) 54050 **AGRIC RANGER** 15 T Easterby 8-10 **D Fentiman**

100-30 Great Profit, 4-1 Maximum Velocity, Yellow Diamonds, 6-1 Overbudget, 10-1 Lope Y Linda, 12-1 Liquid Cooled, 14-1 others.

Brighton
Rob Wright

2.30 Recon Mission **4.00** U S S Charleston
3.00 Enamored **4.30** Mart
3.30 Celebrating Ethel **5.00** Solar Phoenix

Going: good to firm, good in places
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best **Sky Sports Racing**

2.30 Handicap (£4,187: 5f) (7)

1 (7) 2-665 **RECON MISSION** 46 (D) A Carroll 10-9-9 **G Downing**
2 (1) 66362 **DIOMED SPIRIT** 39 (D) C Gordon 6-9-9 **C Bishop**
3 (6) 21022 **DREAMBIRD DOLLY** 17 (B,T,D) J Gallagher 4-9-8 **D J Murphy (7)**
4 (2) 46020 **STAPLEFORD PARK** 109 M Attwater 4-9-8 **J Glennon (7)**
5 (5) 50013 **WASHINGTON HEIR** 38 (CD) A Carroll 4-9-4 **W Carson**
6 (3) 4-600 **REPORTER** 17 (H,D) S Hodgson 4-9-4 **W Carver**
7 (4) 40050 **HAKIN ADRAAR** 8 (B) Martin Dunne 3-9-1 **D Keenan**

2-1 Dreambird Dolly, 9-4 Diomed Spirit, 3-1 Washington Heir, 8-1 Recon Mission, 14-1 Stapleford Park, 20-1 Reporter, 25-1 Hakin Adraar.

3.00 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £4,187: 6f) (5)

1 (5) 46 **LITTLE MESTER** 15 S C Williams 9-7 **J Doughty**
2 (2) **RED TAIL** R Hannon 9-7 **S C Cronin (5)**
3 (4) 0 **CRUSE ON BYE** 39 M Attwater 9-4 **J Glennon (7)**
4 (3) 35 **ENAMORED** 15 (BF) E Dunlop 9-2 **D Probert**
5 (1) 0 **NAPPS WAY** 14 J S Moore 8-13 **D J Murphy (7)**

6-4 Enamored, 2-1 Red Tail, Little Mester, 50-1 Napps Way, 66-1 Cruse On Bye.

3.30 Classified Stakes (£4,187: 1m 2f) (6)

1 (1) 60004 **CELEBRATING ETHEL** 2 (P,CD) A Carroll 7-9-9 **Myla Coppins (5)**
2 (4) 00265 **DOGGED** 13 (B,D) A Carroll 9-9-9 **W Carson**
3 (2) 60005 **FITZMAURICE** 14 A Carroll 4-9-9 **J Doughty**
4 (6) 14423 **MYNA** 17 (H,D) A Carroll 5-9-9 **G Downing**
5 (3) 00-04 **OUTRACE** 13 (P) R Hannon 6-9-9 **S C Cronin (5)**
6 (5) 5-204 **THUNDERING BREEZE** 176 (P) G & J Moore 5-9-9 **D Probert**

2-1 Myna, 9-4 Thundering Breeze, 9-2 Dogged, 8-1 Fitzmaurice, Outrace, 12-1 Celebrating Ethel.

4.00 Handicap (£10,468: 6f) (10)

1 (5) 2305- **THE QUIET GENT** 295 (D) Brian Toomey 4-10-0 **D Probert**
2 (8) -1224 **MARCELLINUS** 41 (BF,D) T Dascombe 3-9-13 **D J Murphy**
3 (4) 00-11 **TENBOB TOMMY** 116 (D) Miss S West 5-9-12 **C Bishop**
4 (7) 13312 **LEQUINTO** 18 (D) A Carroll 9-9-12 **W Carson**
5 (1) 2226- **BONA FORTUNA** 309 (T,CD) M Appleby 5-9-11 **D Keenan**
6 (6) 13021 **GREY HORIZON** 23 (V,CD) S Dixon 3-9-9 **C Howarth (3)**
7 (9) 12035 **CAYMAN TAI** 13 R Hannon 4-9-8 **S C Cronin (5)**
8 (3) 15052 **U S S CHARLESTON** 8 Lemos Souza 3-9-6 **C Planas**
9 (10) 0-012 **ANCIENT TIMES** 20 (T,D) Harry Eustace 8-9-3 **P-L Jamin**
10 (2) 66401 **DUSKAURA** 13 (D) A Carroll 3-9-1 **Myla Coppins (5)**

5-1 Grey Horizon, 11-2 U S S Charleston, Lequinto, 7-1 Tenbob Tommy, Marcellinus, Ancient Times, 10-1 others.

4.30 Handicap (£4,187: 6f) (7)

1 (4) 65231 **DRAGON GOD** 5 (T) A Carroll 4-9-12(5ex) **C Bishop**
2 (1) 43643 **MART** 5 (T,CD) D Donovan 5-9-9 **D Keenan**
3 (5) 52-30 **RAJETERIAT** 46 C Gordon 4-9-6 **Josephine Gordon**
4 (6) 22415 **BIG TIME RASCAL** 31 (T,CD) S Hodgson 5-9-6 **B Sayette**
5 (7) 00001 **MANHATTAN CHUTE** 24 (D) J & S Best 4-9-6 **F Marsh**
6 (2) 3-061 **BATED BREEZE** 31 (CD) G & J Moore 5-9-3 **D Probert**
7 (3) 5-026 **KODI K** 38 J Gallagher 3-8-11 **J Leavy**

3-1 Dragon God, 7-2 Manhattan Chute, Bated Breeze, 5-1 Big Time Rascal, 11-2 Mart, 10-1 Kodi K, 25-1 Rajeteriat.

5.00 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,187: 7f) (7)

1 (3) 05060 **KING CHERRY** 2 (T) S C Williams 9-9 **J Doughty**
2 (6) 556-0 **SOLAR PHOENIX** 55 (B) R Teal 9-8 **D Costello**
3 (2) -6003 **PENNINE WAY** 17 J Channon 9-5 **G Bass**
4 (5) 54113 **SHES GOT THE BLUES** 41 (CD) A Carroll 9-4 **Myla Coppins (5)**
5 (7) 24664 **SUPERSTORM** 23 (V) C Fellowes 8-13 **M Mortensen (5)**
6 (4) 60035 **ARVANA BELLE** 13 (B,C) B Millman 8-9 **D Probert**
7 (1) 0-006 **SNOW DAY** 38 A Carroll 8-9 **Molly Gunn (5)**

2-1 Pennine Way, 5-2 Shes Got The Blues, 5-1 Superstorm, 6-1 Arvana Belle, 10-1 Solar Phoenix, 12-1 King Cherry, 20-1 Snow Day.

Newmarket
Rob Wright

5.27 Sommood **7.12** Spring Bloom
6.02 Oh Sweet Adare **7.47** Rogue Citation
6.37 Nabati **8.22** Blue Noon

Going: good to firm
Draw: no advantage **Racing TV**

5.27 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,700: 7f) (8)

1 (1) **DESERT CASTLE** C Appleby 9-7 **B Loughnane**
2 (3) **FARASAN** J & T Gosden 9-7 **O Murphy**
3 (2) **HIERAX** W Haggas 9-7 **C Fallon**
4 (7) **MY BOY** A Balding 9-7 **J Watson**
5 (6) **NETHERSTREAM** J Chapple-Hyam 9-7 **D Egan**
6 (5) **NIDAL** S C Williams 9-7 **M Ghiani**
7 (4) **RE SHARDANA** (T) Hayley Turton 9-7 **G Wood**
8 (8) **SOMMOOD** S & E Crisford 9-7 **J Doyle**

13-8 Desert Castle, 11-4 Farasan, 9-2 Hierax, 5-1 Sommood, 12-1 My Boy, 16-1 Netherstream, 50-1 Nidal, 100-1 Re Shardana.

6.02 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,185: 1m) (4)

1 (3) 0 **BINT PALACE PIER** 14 R Hughes 9-2 **D Egan**
2 (4) **LILY PINK** C Johnston 9-2 **R Hornby**
3 (2) **OH SWEET ADARE** C Appleby 9-2 **B Loughnane**
4 (1) 62 **ZARAKOVA** 22 (BF) A Balding 9-2 **O Murphy**

4-6 Oh Sweet Adare, 9-4 Zarakova, 10-1 Bint Palace Pier, Lily Pink.

6.37 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,234: 6f) (5)

1 (1) 12 **NABATI** 21 (BF,D) C Appleby 9-11 **B Loughnane**
2 (5) 1 **TAWAKAL** 21 (D) S & E Crisford 9-11 **J Doyle**
3 (3) **AL WIDYAN** A Balding 9-4 **O Murphy**
4 (4) **ROLL UP RAYMOND** Gihan Arnolda 9-4 **G Wood**
5 (2) 00 **THE RESDEV ROCKET** 14 M & D Easterby 9-4 **S Osborne**

8-13 Nabati, 11-4 Tawakal, 5-1 Al Widyan, 25-1 The Resdev Rocket, 50-1 Roll Up Raymond.

7.12 Handicap (£6,542: 6f) (10)

1 (10) 65422 **HAVANA BLUE** 14 (BF,C) J Camacho 6-10-0 **J Doyle**
2 (8) 1405- **LIL BROTHER** 249 (W) Michael Keady 3-9-12 **K S McHugh**
3 (1) 20-06 **ASPULL** 35 P McEntee 4-9-9 **Grace McEntee**
4 (7) 23211 **SPRING BLOOM** 7 (CD) J Butler 9-9-9(4ex) **N Callan**
5 (5) 13200 **FISCAL POLICY** 14 (D) R Carr 7-9-8 **B Loughnane**
6 (6) 61113 **FENLANDER** 20 (D) Mrs P Sly 5-9-8 **R Hornby**
7 (9) -0050 **FIFTY NIFTY** 11 (E,C) Martin Dunne 5-9-6 **C Fallon**
8 (3) 102-0 **ROYAL ACCORD** 14 (CD) P Chapple-Hyam 4-9-6 **H Davies**
9 (2) 00505 **THE CALTONIAN** 18 (B,D) Miss L Perratt 7-9-3 **O Murphy**
10 (4) 14040 **AKABUSI** 21 (B,T,D) M Murphy 3-9-2 **S Osborne**

13-8 Spring Bloom, 11-4 Havana Blue, 4-1 Fenlander, 12-1 The Caltonian, 14-1 Lil Brother, 16-1 Fifty Nifty, Akabusi, 20-1 Aspull.

7.47 Handicap (£5,154: 7f) (7)

1 (4) -4134 **HILLTOP** 16 (D) D & C Kubler 5-10-2 **S Osborne**
2 (7) 52441 **ARETI** 9 (T,D) Oliver Cole 3-9-10 **B Loughnane**
3 (2) 31-63 **ROGUE CITATION** 30 (T) E Bethell 3-9-7 **H Davies**
4 (6) 02563 **ALBESEEINGYER** 53 (CD) Steph Hollinshead 7-9-7 **D Egan**
5 (5) 21140 **LEXINGTON EXPRESS** 34 (P) M Botti 3-9-7 **M Ghiani**
6 (3) -2410 **SHOW ME GOLD** 21 (D) T Dascombe 3-9-2 **W Cox**
7 (1) 435- **MELODICAL** 302 E Walker 3-8-11 **O Murphy**

11-4 Areti, 3-1 Hilltop, 100-30 Rogue Citation, 5-1 Albeseeingyer, 7-1 Melodical, 16-1 Lexington Express, Show Me Gold.

8.22 Handicap (£5,154: 1m 2f) (3)

1 (1) 34-11 **SHIMMERING SANDS** 39 (T,D) M & D Easterby 7-9-12 **O Murphy**
2 (2) 10431 **LUCKY HERO** 9 (D) D O'Meara 3-9-4 **B Loughnane**
3 (3) 43632 **BLUE NOON** 14 R Hannon 3-9-4 **P Dobbs**

10-11 Shimmering Sands, 6-4 Lucky Hero, 11-2 Blue Noon.

Yesterday's racing results

Brighton

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

2.38 (6f 210yd) 1, **Valadero** (Liam Wright, 17-2); 2, Spirited Dancer (9-2); 3, River Wharfe (8-11 fav). 8 ran. ¾l, hd. Brian Toomey.

3.13 (6f 210yd) 1, **The Monkey King** (Rhys Clutterbuck, 1-1 fav); 2, Foscarini (3-1); 3, Regalism (5-2). 5 ran. 17½l, 17½l. R M Beckett.

3.50 (7f 216yd) 1, **Gone Rogue** (T P Queally, 6-5 fav); 2, Dandy G Boy (18-1); 3, Boubyan (4-1). 6 ran. ½l, 5¼l. G & J Moore.

4.25 (1m 3f 198yd) 1, **Tai Hang Pegasus** (Paddy Bradley, 9-2); 2, Nibras Gold (11-4); 3, Sarangpur (10-11). 5 ran. NR: Brave Hunter. 27½l, 1l. C Fellowes.

4.55 (1m 3f 198yd) 1, **Dream Of Ithaca** (Liam Wright, 15-8); 2, Foinix (11-10); 3, Dogged (15-2). 5 ran. NR: Gearing's Point. 3½l, 5l. J Gallagher.

5.30 (6f 210yd) 1, **Serenity Dream** (Jack Doughty, 4-1); 2, Dion Baker (13-2); 3, North View (9-4). 6 ran. NR: Just Jump. 1½l, 1¼l. A W Carroll.

Placepot: £52.60 **Quadpot: £22.90**

Chepstow

Going: Good to Firm

5.20 (1m 4f) 1, **Aravalli** (Taylor Fisher, 11-2); 2, Curran (5-1); 3, Cosmo Brown (7-1). 7 ran. 4½l, nk. J Tickle.

5.55 (5f 16yd) 1, **Downonmainstreet** (D Egan, 1-1 fav); 2, Rogue Dakota (13-2); 3, Marzad (25-1). 4 ran. 3l, 8l. M L W Bell.

6.30 (5f 16yd) 1, **Solar Edge** (Gina Mangan, 15-8 fav); 2, Rogue Bullet (3-1); 3, Over Spiced (7-1). 7 ran. 4¼l, hd. C Mason.

7.05 (1m 14yd) 1, **Revelance** (Edward Greatrex, 9-4 fav); 2, Nakaaha (10-1); 3, Spirit Of The Bay (17-2). 7 ran. 1l, ½l. R M Beckett.

7.40 (7f 16yd) 1, **Espona Bay** (Christian Howarth, 5-1); 2, Sydney Rock (14-1); 3, Clementines Star (1-1 fav). 7 ran. ½l, 3¼l. S Dixon.

8.15 (6f 16yd) 1, **Red Snapper** (Charlie Tucker, 5-2); 2, Pull The Rug (11-1); 3, Hallandale Beach (6-5 fav). 4 ran. nk, 2½l. Kathy Turner.

Placepot: £681.20
Quadpot: £91.50

Newmarket

Going: Good to Firm

2.20 (1m) 1, **Stormy Music** (Alfie Redman, 13-2); 2, Born A Rebel (7-2); 3, Decalogue (10-1). 7 ran. 1½l, sh. A M Balding.

2.55 (1m) 1, **Woodhay Wayfarer** (Saffie Osborne, 4-1); 2, High Calibre (100-30); 3, Emerald Bay (9-2). 5 ran. 1¼l, 3l. T Ward.

3.30 (6f) 1, **Crown And Two** (Billy Loughnane, 7-2); 2, Zephyra (20-1); 3, Hello You Ten (5-1). 7 ran. 3½l, 4¼l. Tom Clover.

4.00 (7f) 1, **Cerro Blanco** (Billy Loughnane, 1-25 fav); 2, Nothing But Love (18-1); 3, Tacticalist (16-1). 4 ran. 7l, 7½l. C Appleby.

4.33 (2m) 1, **High Fibre** (Cieren Fallon, 6-5 fav); 2, Percy Shelley (8-1); 3, Koala Rose (9-4). 5 ran. 1¾l, 7½l. James Owen.

5.08 (1m 4f) 1, **Educator** (Billy Loughnane, 11-10 fav); 2, Seeking Charles (11-2); 3, King's Castle (11-2). 6 ran. ns, 1½l. Miss H C Knight.

Placepot: £88.30 **Quadpot: £16.00**

Sandown Park

Going: Good to Firm (good in places (r) good, good to firm in places (

Collapsing case a bad look for sport already in trouble

Alex Lowe

Rugby Correspondent

Richard Boardman was the good guy. The former television producer rode into town in charge of his own law firm, promising brain scans for vulnerable former rugby players and a class action litigation to seek compensation from the RFU, WRU and World Rugby. Hundreds of players signed up, accusing the governing bodies of negligence in their handling of concussion.

But six years later, the case is on the brink of collapse. Boardman has been ousted by the players as 430 of them — including Steve Thompson, Phil Vickery and Alix Popham — face the prospect of being struck out after a judge criticised "widespread non-compliance" and "misleading evidence" provided by their solicitor.

The managing judge Senior Master Jeremy David Cook said that there was no legal precedent and he would consider the matter over the summer break, with a decision due by October.

World Rugby, the RFU and the WRU deny the claims against them and say that the court case prevents them from offering direct help, support or sympathy for the players involved. They never offered any great assistance before the process began so their present position feels a little convenient.

For a long time the governing bodies denied any causal link between concussion and brain injuries; a position that was informed and influenced by the discredited Australian scientist Paul McCrory, who was chairman of the Concussion In Sport Group (CISP). And critics question the independence of the research.

The NFL settled a billion-dollar concussion case in 2015, after which the RFU was asked whether rugby faced its own ticking time bomb. The governing body in England was adamant in 2014 that the "landscape of risk in retired players is not something we believe is a ticking time bomb in rugby union".

Many of the players involved felt discarded by the game once their careers were over. "Who was there for me when I was stood on the edge of a cliff?" Neil Clark, the former Exeter Chiefs hooker, said. The stories are heart-rending. The players shared the same collection of symptoms: depression, relationship breakdowns and forgetfulness; often drinking too much and prone to losing their temper at the slightest provocation.

Scans and neurological tests arranged by Boardman confirmed brain damage with a range of diagnoses including early onset dementia and probable chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), the progressive brain condition.

Popham, Thompson and Michael Lipman were the first high-profile players to go public. Jason Hobson, the one-cap England prop, was told he had six irreparable lesions on his brain. His involvement in the litigation is to try to secure any payment possible that would help to cover the costs when he ends up in a home.

Clark, Hobson's childhood friend, received his diagnosis on the same day as his old mate. "I have a constant screaming in my ears. What the hell have we done?" he said. "I love what rugby gave me. But I hate what it has left me with."

CTE can only be definitively diagnosed after death. Last weekend Vickery, the warrior prop from England's World Cup-winning team, talked about ending his own life so that his brain could be examined. It was a gut-punch of an interview in The Observer, giving a harrowing glimpse into the daily challenges of living with such a condition.

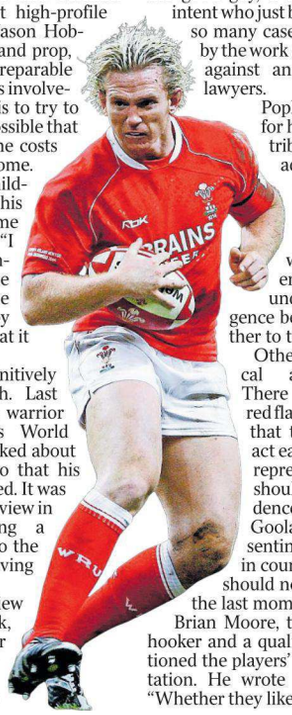
Vickery's interview prompted Paul Pook, another former player involved in the litigation and the founder of Tackle Suicide, to issue a reminder that the most important battle is not being fought in the courtroom. "This isn't about who wins or loses in court. It's about whether we lose more players," Pook wrote. "While this case is being fought in the courtroom, another battle is being fought in the minds of some of the people at its centre."

There are players involved in the litigation who still see Boardman as the good guy, a solicitor with noble intent who just became swamped by so many cases. He was drowned by the work as a small enterprise against an army of defence lawyers.

Popham thanked him for his "important" contribution — but also admitted that the case was too big and too complex for Boardman. Leigh Day, a company with greater experience and resources, is undertaking due diligence before deciding whether to take on the case.

Others are more sceptical about Boardman. There have been multiple red flags and it is a surprise that the players did not act earlier in seeking new representation. "They should have lost confidence a year ago," Nina Goolamali, KC, representing World Rugby, said in court last month. "They should not have waited until the last moment."

Brian Moore, the former England hooker and a qualified solicitor, questioned the players' choice of representation. He wrote in The Telegraph: "Whether they like it or not, the claim-



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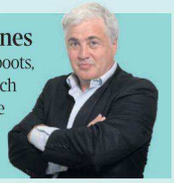

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ANDREW MCCAREN FOR THE TIMES

Thompson, top, and Popham, left, are among those who were represented by Boardman, above, with the case on the verge of collapse after his exit

ants are in charge of this litigation and they instruct the lawyers, not the other way around."

Except, in this case, it has always felt like the other way around. Advertisements were placed encouraging players to sign up in a bid to grow the litigation.

Will Green, the former Wasps prop, was sued by Boardman's firm Rylands Garth after refusing to sign up. Green's initial scan, arranged by Boardman, indicated further investigation was required. Green visited a second expert on Harley Street who cleared him of early onset dementia. Rylands Garth sued Green for the costs of the first scans and lost.

That should have been a red flag to the players. The Times has spoken to another high-profile player who was in the same situation as Green and chose to pay about £12,000 to leave the litigation, rather than get entangled in a legal battle.

There were warning signs in every court hearing. In December 2023 Senior Master Cook denied an application from the claimants for a group litigation order (GLO), citing "a gaping hole" in the evidence.

The GLO requires that full medical records be shared with the defence so both sides can select their lead claimants to represent the whole group, allowing the case to proceed to trial.

Rylands Garth said it had provided reams of material. However, Senior Master Cook stated that sharing all records is crucial for the integrity of the process.

That was 2½ years ago. It has still not happened. Leigh Day's decision about taking over the case will be critical. If the case continues, there is the potential for unedifying scenes in which lawyers representing the sport grill former players on the stand, challenging them to prove that rugby caused their symptoms and not drinking or fighting or drugs or genetics or sheer bad luck.

The whole case has cast a shadow over rugby. Professional players play too many matches and there is merit in Popham's argument that contact training should be limited, as it is in the NFL.

But rugby schools are starting to introduce football into their programmes after listening to concerned parents. Steve Lancaster, the New Zealand Rugby chief executive, told The Times recently that the sport is not doing enough to counter a narrative of negativity as rugby strives to keep youth participation high.

Boys and girls do not play the same game as the professionals. The laws are different. The sport is not nearly as physical. After years of campaigning, concussion education in youth rugby is strong. And the kids all benefit from all that rugby has to offer — community, teamwork, friendship, confidence, fitness and discipline.

The perception of danger in youth rugby will linger, even if the players fail to win their case. And there are serious doubts now about whether they will.

Knowles buys into Pirates as they eye Prem

Will Kelleher

Television presenter Nick Knowles has invested in Champ Rugby side Cornish Pirates, who have designs on making the top flight in the next decade.

Knowles, inset, who made his name presenting the home improvements show *DIY SOS*, is a rugby fan and periodically attends Pirates matches at Mennaye Field. The club were bought by Welsh-Cornish pharmaceutical millionaire Richard Wastnage in May and secured seven-figure funding from United States firm Stonewood Capital Management soon after. Now Knowles has joined and has pledged funds.

Sally Pettipher, the Pirates chief executive, told the BBC the investments will help get the club to a position where they can consider applying for a franchise spot in the Gallagher Prem. The top flight will be open to expansion teams in 2029-30, which may come too soon for Pirates, but they are ambitious.

"[This investment] is important, but it's not a lottery win," Pettipher said. "The ten-year development plan is a series of investments that gets us to be a top-of-Prem club."

In the Prem the Pirates would have to spend a minimum of £5 million on their squad, way above their present £800,000 a year. They have doubled their commercial revenue to £1.2 million in the past year.

All Blacks must be tested if old-school tours are to survive

Will Kelleher

Deputy Rugby Correspondent

This week in Cape Town, the spirit of Llanelli — and Max Boyce — is alive and well. John Dobson, the Stormers head coach, is a historian of the game — inspired by his father, Paul, the late author and journalist — and so in typical fashion is rousing his team for their shot at the All Blacks on Friday with tales of 1972 and 1976.

This week he played his squad Boyce's 9-3 ditty, commemorating the day Llanelli beat New Zealand by that score 54 years ago, "and how the pubs ran dry".

Western Province had their own day of lore against the All Blacks in 1976, when they came back from 11-0 down to win 12-11 in the last minute thanks to tries from Bossie Clarke and Chris Pope, with Robbie Blair kicking a conversion from the right at Newlands to seal the win. An All Blacks team featuring greats like Ian Kirkpatrick and Bryan Williams were downed by a club side — could that feat really be repeated in the modern age?

Dobson invited Peter Whipp, the iconic '76 Western Province centre, and Clarke to present jerseys to the Stormers team this week and hammer home the importance of these traditions, as they prepare for the first match of the Rugby's Greatest Rivalry tour against New Zealand in Cape Town tonight.

Stormers v New Zealand
Cape Town, tonight, 6pm
TV: Sky Sports Mix

"1976 was an evocative year in South Africa. We had the Soweto riots and an All Blacks tour that shouldn't have gone ahead [due to the apartheid regime in South Africa]," Dobson tells The Times, before his attempt to make fresh history, half a century later. "We [Western Province] didn't play them in 1996. To go from 50 years to a few hours away is remarkable."

At The Times we are preparing a special *Ruck* podcast series tracking the history of South Africa-New Zealand clashes — through racism, rebellion and readmission — to launch before the Test series, which begins at Ellis Park on August 22. We have called it *Rugby's Greatest Rivals*, a play on the official, trademarked name for this back-to-the-future tour, which itself has been borrowed from a fantastic book written by Dobson Sr, the historian, titled *Rugby's Greatest Rivalry*, tracking the story from 1921 to 1995.

How well matches like tonight's go is vital.

Money is why we are really here. New Zealand and South Africa are envious of the British & Irish Lions, which props up their, and Australia's, rugby economy once every 12 years when the touring side visits.

They wanted to find a way of milking that cash cow for themselves, so they struck out on their own, to print "the biggest ticket that hadn't been sold for 30 years", as one executive puts it.

Talk of reviving tours between the countries once every four years began in 2023. To make it happen, the Rugby Championship has been mothballed this year, and for 2030, when South Africa will tour New Zealand.

With both rivals on the breadline thanks to "galloping" costs and a disparate rugby landscape, the foes became commercial friends.

"We've been accused of greed, but greed is defined as wanting more of something you have — we both have debt, we want less of it," a South African source says.

The old-school touring has sponsors falling over themselves to be involved. The fourth Test in Baltimore — that hotbed of All Blacks-Springbok history — will sell out easily, and put both countries front of the queue when World Rugby is handing out profits from the 2031 World Cup in the United States. When the All Blacks played in Chicago against Ireland in November, it brought them their highest match-day revenue outside a Lions game.

They want to keep massaging their brand Stateside, and for Baltimore to beat that. Neither New Zealand nor South Africa can get near the circa £15 million the RFU makes out of a top men's Test at Allianz Stadium in Twickenham, so this tour is one way of keeping step.

Yet sport lives and dies by its on-field competitiveness. Jeopardy and intrigue is practically guaranteed by the Test series but, as we are finding with Lions tours, the realities of professionalism and player welfare mean that midweek touring matches can become increasingly difficult sells. The hosts protect their Test players, the touring squad hammers the hapless club side and learns little. Big sponsors will drift if half of these weeks on tour are not special.

Stormers, Sharks, Bulls and the Lions must, by this year's touring agreement, pick their "strongest possible" line-ups. Tonight's Stormers team is good, despite being shorn of ten Springboks — including fly half Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, who starts at No 10 for South Africa in Argentina tomorrow.

Beauden Barrett is a star name in the All Blacks team, but the captain, Ardie Savea, is being saved for the Tests.

Tickets at DHL Stadium will cost three times more than they would for a URC match, but 40,000 are expected to go. There will be far fewer at Kings Park, in Durban, for the Sharks match next Tuesday and it could be sparse at Ellis Park when the Lions have their go between the first and second Tests.

"This tour will help define who New Zealand are next year at the World Cup," Joel Stransky, the South African 1995 World Cup winner, tells The Times. "They are not physically able to stand up to South Africa week in, week out, because they're not accustomed to playing at that physical level in Super Rugby. This tour will help them, and I hope it does because world rugby needs the All Blacks to be strong."

There are pressures on the South African franchise teams to make this whole thing sing.

"If we get this right it'll be really good for this model, but if the midweek games become like the British & Irish Lions ones in 2021 and we all take 40, 50 points — if someone doesn't topple the All Blacks, or the tour doesn't have a few scares — then I think it's the end of this touring concept," Dobson says.

Infantino refuses to resign – how will he be brought down?

Fifa president may try to ride out the anger directed at him but his opponents have options, writes **Martyn Ziegler**

Is it a surprise that Gianni Infantino is refusing to resign as Fifa president?
Not really. The amount of criticism of him and his World Cup sell-off plan from within football is unprecedented in Fifa's history, but he believes he still has a small chance of turning his fortunes around. It is also the case that without the Fifa presidency, and his $6 million [about £4.5 million] annual salary and bonus, Infantino is a nobody: no private jet, no mingling with world leaders and celebrities, no one desperate to please him; no police escort when he is driven in a limousine to meetings. It is likely that in Infantino's mind, he will think that it is worth bearing all the anger and venom directed at him, and the humiliation of his failed scheme, if it means he can continue in his role.

How will Uefa's insistence on boycotting Fifa's competitions play out?
The Fifa Under-20 women's World Cup is due to take place in Poland in September, while the women's World Cup qualifiers involving European sides are due to take place in October. If those two are threatened, that would be a huge problem for Fifa to deal with, and would certainly trigger a new crisis for Infantino.

What if he still refuses to resign?
There is a presidential election in March and if he survives until then he is sure to face a challenger — until this crisis it had been assumed he would be re-elected unopposed. The challenger would be someone seen as a unifying force across the opposition to Infantino, but is unlikely to be European as there is a strong feeling that in Infantino, and previously Sepp Blatter, Europe has had its chance and failed.

Are there any likely candidates?
Victor Montagliani, the Canadian who is the president of Concacaf, which represents federations in north and central America and the Caribbean, is a possibility. Nasser Al-Khelaifi, the president of Paris Saint-Germain, senior figure in beIN Sport and chairman of European Football Clubs is another. Some figures in football would support Kevin Lamour, the Frenchman who is No 3 in Fifa and who last week distanced himself from Infantino, or Lise Klaveness, the campaigning head of the Norwegian FA.

AP

Infantino, right, with Fifa secretary general Mattias Grafstrom, left, during a women's Afcon game in Morocco this week

Do players have a view on Infantino?
Fifpro, the international players' union, has very strong views despite signing a new memorandum of understanding with Infantino during the World Cup. It has said in a statement: "Fifa Forward Enterprise [the sell-off plan] is gone. The abuse of power that produced it is not. Governance reforms, not a cover-up, are urgently needed. It is a profound abuse of presidential power."

The statement adds: "We also note Fifa's warning that it 'will no longer tolerate any attacks on its integrity'. Let us be clear: scrutiny of football's governance is not an attack. It is the duty of everyone who sustains the game."

Where does Infantino's support lie now?
Africa has been his traditional powerbase and where he hopes to recover lost ground. It is no coincidence that he arranged to have next year's presidential election in Rabat — Morocco are perhaps his greatest supporters. Indeed, last night, the Confederation of African Football threw its weight behind the embattled president. A statement read: "The CAF EXCO also unanimously reconfirmed its support for Fifa president Gianni Infantino and thanked him for his support for African football over the years."

What else could trigger his resignation?
If the sponsors start getting cold feet — and they will be very concerned by all the negative publicity around Fifa — then that could prove telling.

Leadership of Fifa still a concern for Jordan's FA

CONTINUED FROM BACK

for his future as Fifa president — Canada was one of the co-hosts of the 2026 World Cup.

Meanwhile, Prince Ali bin al-Hussein, the president of Jordan's FA and one of the most influential figures in Asian football, has said "serious concerns" around Fifa's leadership remain despite overdue funds suddenly being sent by Fifa.

Prince Ali said money that the association should have received eight months ago mysteriously appeared 48 hours after he criticised Fifa for "blackmail".

The prince — the half-brother of Jordan's king Abdullah II — said this week that Infantino's aides had suggested during the World Cup the funds would be paid if he endorsed the Fifa president for re-election.

The funds, due from the Fifa Arab Cup in December, have now been paid but Prince Ali, who ran against Infantino for the Fifa presidency in 2016, said: "This was funding that should have been received eight months ago.

"While this is a good development for our players, it does not change the serious concerns we in the football world have regarding the Fifa leadership, nor does it change what our FAs have been subjected to in the past.

"It is symptomatic of those exact difficulties that we all face, and that are usually linked to the Fifa presidential elections. And it does not change my clear position concerning the leadership of Fifa: my FA and I will not endorse president Infantino, nor will we vote for him."

In a letter to Fifa Council members, Infantino said he wanted to "restore confidence in the organisation".

He added: "We acknowledge mistakes were made in the process of the proposed establishment of Fifa Forward Enterprise (FFE).

"We acknowledge that errors were also made after the proposal was leaked to media. We sincerely apologise for these errors and commit to them not happening again."

Infantino also issued veiled threats about criticism of Fifa.

The letter adds: "With the project withdrawn, Fifa will no longer tolerate any attacks on its integrity, good governance and due process and will take all necessary measures to protect and safeguard its name and reputation."

Blow for Arsenal as Vinícius Jr will be staying in Madrid

Gary Jacob

Arsenal will have to go back to the drawing board to sign a top left winger after Vinícius Jr agreed a new six-year deal with Real Madrid.

The Premier League champions had been attempting to exploit Vinícius's contract with the Spanish club, which he had run down to its final year.

However, at a meeting on Wednesday the Brazil forward accepted a salary increase, after tax, from £12.8 million to about £20.5 million with bonuses, despite it being less than the £25.7 million he initially wanted. The contract extension should be finalised this week.

"Vinícius Jr has become one of the most important players in one of the most successful periods in our history," Real said in a statement.

Arsenal offered a similar financial package to encourage the 26-year-old to reject Real's proposal, which would likely have forced the Spanish club to sell him this month.

Instead, he becomes the second winger Arsenal have missed out on in the summer window, having been unwilling to pay £117 million for Morgan Rogers, who joined Chelsea from Aston Villa last month.

Arsenal have been willing to spend big on elite players to support Mikel Arteta's desire to go to "a different dimension". Arteta wants to close the gap to European rivals such as Paris Saint-Germain, who defeated them on penalties in the Champions League final.

Vinícius Jr has agreed a six-year deal to stay with Real Madrid

Vinícius was the calibre of player Arteta had in mind and would have joined Bruno Guimarães, his Brazil team-mate, who is expected to be announced by Arsenal within 48 hours.

Vinícius has won two Champions Leagues with Real and was runner-up in the Ballon d'Or two years ago. He scored 22 goals and claimed 14 assists across all competitions last season. He scored four goals in five matches at the World Cup.

Arteta has been trying to strengthen Arsenal's left flank for two years, making unsuccessful moves for Raphinha, Nico Williams and Leroy Sané. This summer, they have explored a deal for France winger Bradley Barcola but, with Liverpool also interested, PSG have dug their heels in over their £128 million valuation.

Arsenal are also searching for a centre back and potentially a forward. Arteta's main target has been Julián Alvarez, hoping that Atletico Madrid refuse to sell the Argentina forward to Barcelona.

Rangers pay price for poor defending in European loss

Rangers paid the price for sloppy defending as they let slip an early lead to lose 2-1 to Jagiellonia Bialystok in Poland in the first leg of their Europa League qualifying tie.

Derek McInnes's first European tie as Rangers manager got off to a dream start when Guilherme Montóia turned a Tuur Rommens cross into his own net after four minutes. Kajetan Szmyt levelled in the 13th minute with a preventable goal before adding a second eight minutes later after more defensive slackness from the Scottish side.

Rangers dominated the second half, with substitute Findlay Curtis crashing a shot off the post in stoppage time, but will have to turn the tie around at Ibrox next week.

‘It’s like speed dating’ – on tour with new boss Jaissle

Martin Hardy
Northern Sports Correspondent, La Manga

Pitchside in sweltering 36C heat in southeast Spain, Matthias Jaissle looks ready to model Newcastle United’s new grey Adidas training range: immaculately groomed, perfectly coiffed hair and, without doubt, gymnasium-familiar.

It is officially day two in the job for the 38-year-old German coach after the announcement on Wednesday evening that the endless paperwork sent through from Al-Ahli, his former (and bitter) club, had been worked through by Newcastle’s lawyers and signed off.

To his left on the training fields of La Manga are a group of athletes that he has to bring together, after a summer of huge change, and prepare to face Liverpool at St James’ Park on the first weekend of the Premier League season in less than three weeks.

In front of him at that moment, however, at 10.30am local time is a sweating, slightly flustered gaggle of about a dozen journalists from north-east England. The contrast is stark.

Welcome to Newcastle.

Jaissle, a 6ft 2in former defender who retired early because of injury, addresses the group. “It’s been intense for the players,” he says. “It will be high energy, we have done double sessions each day. It’s been tough. Today will be calmer.”

Beside him is a member of the club staff with grey hair. “Yours will go that colour in two years in this job,” he is told, jocularly.

“I’m more worried about it falling out,” he replies. It appears one of few concerns.

Perhaps we should rewind here.

Three weeks ago the idea, here at the Grand Hyatt La Manga Golf Club & Spa, was to spend time with and then interview Eddie Howe. Yet that ship, unbeknown to just about everybody at Newcastle, was setting sail. Howe agreed to stay on as head coach until his successor was in place. He told those at the club that there would probably be an uplift in training when he left; five years is a long time at a club.

Still, the confidence of those employed to keep Newcastle’s players at peak fitness is noticeable. “The early signs are amazing,” James Bunce, Newcastle’s respected performance director, says. “The staff integration, everyone standing up together. You’ve got no time to waste, so every moment counts. It’s like speed dating.

“We spoke when we introduced Matthias and his staff about how the Liverpool game is not moving. We all need to be on the same path, get to know each other, ask questions, collaborate and integrate.”

Jaissle’s real work on the training ground comes after an increasingly perspiring press pack leave, and a football club keen to show their new head coach at work begin to release videos. Then it is business.

“Guys, that’s the rules,” Jaissle tells a group of players he first met on Saturday, “understand it straight away.”

Players race one another, tackles fly in. “If it is a sliding tackle that is needed to block, block,” the head coach says, before clapping his hands together. “Don’t lose!” A stopwatch hangs around his neck. Liverpool are 17 days away.

Newcastle sources insist they had tracked Jaissle for a month. It was a surprise when he moved to Saudi Arabia, having won two league titles in Austria with Red Bull Salzburg. This move was not foreseen either. Al-Ahli had just signed Francisco Trincão and Eduard Spertsyan after finishing third in the Saudi Pro League last season. Jaissle leaving now was not part of their programme, but ambition drips from the German.

He played for Thomas Tuchel as a teenager in Stuttgart’s youth teams and then for Ralf Rangnick at Hoffenheim. When he had to retire in his mid-twenties because of knee and achilles injuries, he began coaching, starting as an assistant at Leipzig. His style as a coach is about high, intense pressing and now he is a man in a hurry to get Newcastle playing his way.

“Always front foot, really aggressive, intense, vertical in our approach of how we want to play football and I think that is the perfect fit for Newcastle,” he says in a club video after his appointment.

Bruno Guimarães, Newcastle’s club captain, confirmed to Jaissle at the start of the week that he no longer felt committed to the club and wanted to move to Arsenal. Guimarães said his farewells to his team-mates before flying to London on Wednesday. The Brazil midfielder was in tears at the end of his leaving speech and the players started singing his name. His transfer will be confirmed when Arsenal say so.

Jaissle will talk about Guimarães later, at The Last Green Tapas & Cocktail Bar, when perched on a stool. There are no chairs. It feels claustrophobic. It lasts ten minutes.

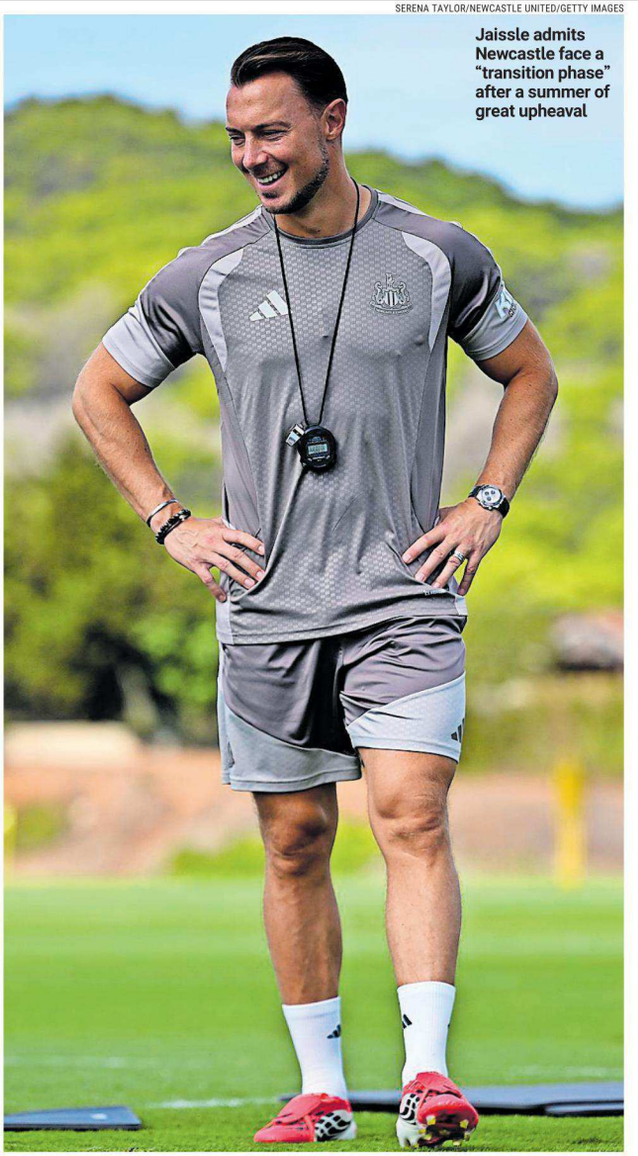
“One day I met him [Guimarães] quickly, but the decision was already made,” Jaissle says. “It was a nice conversation, a fantastic player, but also a great human being. It’s tough. We trust the players who are here already, but… when the season starts we will see some more new faces.”

He uses the phrase “transition phase” five times, but is mystified that Newcastle are now spoken about as being in a potential relegation fight. “Many players [have] left, big, big players, legends for the club left, but we need to see it as a chance, not having too many excuses now, just thinking forward [of] what we can influence,” he says.

He is asked if the target is ultimately to break into the Premier League’s big six, a group it feels Newcastle are slipping away from, nearly five years after they were bought by the richest owners in world football. “You asked that already once before,” he replies, laughing. “So it’s a long, long journey, right?

“It’s for me the most important thing that you just do your best every day and get the best out of the players, try to improve them, support them, give them also the courage to grow, and that’s now the phase where we’re in.”

SERENA TAYLOR/NEWCASTLE UNITED/GETTY IMAGES



Jaissle admits Newcastle face a “transition phase” after a summer of great upheaval

Age of PL managers

	PL games*	Senior games*
Fabian Hürzeler	76	76
Matthias Jaissle	0	248
Álvaro Arbeloa	0	47
Gary O’Neil	88	127
Andoni Iraola	114	341
Mikel Arteta	248	353
Xabi Alonso	0	272
Michael Carrick	19	156
Keith Andrews	38	45
Enzo Maresca	57	159
Roberto De Zerbi	77	470
Pierre Sage	0	96
Frank Lampard	104	278
Sergej Jakirovic	0	290
Daniel Farke	87	684
Marco Rose	0	403
Régis Le Bris	38	169
Oliver Glasner	89	503
Unai Emery	190	1,122
David Moyes	754	1,211

*as manager **as manager, all clubs

Barcelona ready to rival Real Madrid in race to sign Rodri from City

Charlotte Duncker

Barcelona have entered the race to sign Rodri as they look to beat their rivals Real Madrid to a deal for the Manchester City midfielder.

Real had been confident they would be able to land the 30-year-old for £40 million but they now face competition from their La Liga rivals for the 2024 Ballon d’Or winner.

Rodri would like to move back to his home country for family reasons and while he was open to a transfer to Madrid, a switch to Barcelona has not been ruled out after they made contact to confirm their interest.

Barcelona are pushing to sign the striker Julián Alvarez from Atletico Madrid but would look to strengthen in midfield, especially given the knee injury picked up by Frenkie de Jong a couple of weeks ago.

While there has been no formal offer made to the player, or to City, the Spanish champions are keeping a close eye on the situation and are ready to rival Real for Rodri’s signature.

While City would like the linchpin of their midfield to stay, he has only one year left on his deal, so they risk losing him on a free transfer next summer if he fails to agree fresh terms before then.

After his World Cup-winning exploits with Spain, including being named player of the tournament, Rodri has been recovering from minor back surgery, which he underwent a couple of weeks ago. He had the procedure to address persistent discomfort and is expected back in Manchester next week to begin his pre-season and join up with the rest of the squad, who are on tour in Asia.

Enzo Maresca has already signed Elliot Anderson from Nottingham Forest for a club-record £116 million and City are working on a deal to bring the Morocco star Ayyoub Bouaddi, 18, to the Etihad Stadium from Lille.

In addition to Rodri, there is a chance that both Tijjani Reijnders and Nico González could leave City, with Forest having already registered their interest in Reijnders. It is likely that City would look to strengthen in the middle of the pitch should there be more departures in that area.

Meanwhile, James Trafford, the England goalkeeper, has become Leeds United’s record signing after joining from Manchester City in a deal worth £40 million, plus add-ons.

Trafford, 23, has signed a five-year deal to become Leeds’ third significant signing of the summer, after the arrival of free agent Harry Wilson and Tarik Muharemovic, the Bosnia-Herzegovina centre back.

Sport Cricket

This squad reflects the troubled state that England are in

Mike Atherton
Chief Cricket Correspondent

The squad for the opening two Tests of the Pakistan series is a reminder that upheaval rarely accompanies a settled and successful team. Had England been winning, no doubt Brendon McCullum would still be in situ, and possibly Ben Stokes, but results had run away from them and they left England's Test team in a troubled state, as this enlarged 16-man squad suggests.

England are a lowly seventh in the World Test Championship, one place above Pakistan. The table is a reminder of the scheduling challenges that are particular to England, given the amount of Test cricket they play, and how much store England supporters set by the Test team. Compare the 13 matches played by England so far, for example, with second-placed South Africa's four.

Test cricket, for England at least, remains the biggest driver of finances, reputation and standing. In the past few months, every match had become a referendum on Bazball, which is why a change to a new coach was welcome; it should enable a little more breathing space to allow players to develop without the accompanying drama that had developed around the two alpha males, McCullum and Stokes.

There is plenty to do. Naming 16 players, usually the size of a touring party, reflects partly on the challenges for the quicker bowlers transitioning out of the Hundred, but also on the uncertainty around the Test team. In a nod to the first of those issues, there are a lot of seam bowlers selected, with Brydon Carse's return and places for Matthew Fisher and Sam Cook, all of whom are likely to miss out on final selection.

Root's presence in the middle order is one of this England side's strengths

Whatever combination they put out, it will have an unproven opening pair, a new No 3, an unproven No 6 and either a specialist spinner picked on hope or a part-time option. The strengths are Joe Root and Harry Brook in the middle order, and a decent fast-bowling cohort. Sam Curran, once fit, is certain to return.

The headline selections first of all. There is an opportunity at No 3 for Jordan Cox because of the knee injury to Jacob Bethell that will keep him out of the series. Cox is a very talented player for whom untimely injuries have limited his opportunities. He has rarely batted in that position in first-class cricket, though, just twice in one match seven years ago, though he opened far more frequently than that for Kent before his move to Essex.

England are well placed for attacking middle-order players and fast bowlers, but proven top-order batsmen and spinners are much scarcer. Given the injuries that have limited his chances so far, Cox will be eager to take his opportunity wherever it comes. He will hope to make a better fist of it than Dan Lawrence did when miscast as an opening batsman against Sri Lanka in 2024, inadvertently demonstrating just how difficult batting against the new ball can be.

Lawrence now gets a welcome opportunity at No 6, as someone who can also bowl serviceable spin. The first two matches, at Headingley and Lord's, will be played at venues where spin has had little effect in recent years and Lawrence is likely to be the main spin option as well if conditions turn out as expected. He is a far better batsman than his brief, skittish appearance as an opener against Sri Lanka suggested. He may have felt the pressure to play in a certain way too, which should subside under the new coaching set-up.

Lawrence is the second leading runscorer in Division One of the County Championship, having made nearly 800 runs for Surrey, with five centuries. But the schedule dims a little of that relevance: he has not played a first-class match since mid-June, when he made 8 and 0 against Glamorgan (he made a double hundred the game before) and has made one half-century in short-form cricket since then. Like everyone else, he will have to adjust rapidly back to first-class cricket after a month of the Hundred.

That Lawrence may end up as the principal spinner if four seamers are wanted suggests the state England are in with spin. Lawrence has nine wickets at an average of 71 this campaign for Surrey, numbers that are skewed by the general freshness of the pitches at the Oval for first-class cricket this year, while Shoaib Bashir, retained here, has bowled ten overs for Derbyshire since the last Test against New Zealand. It is telling if England's first-choice spinner is struggling to get in Derbyshire's 50-over team.

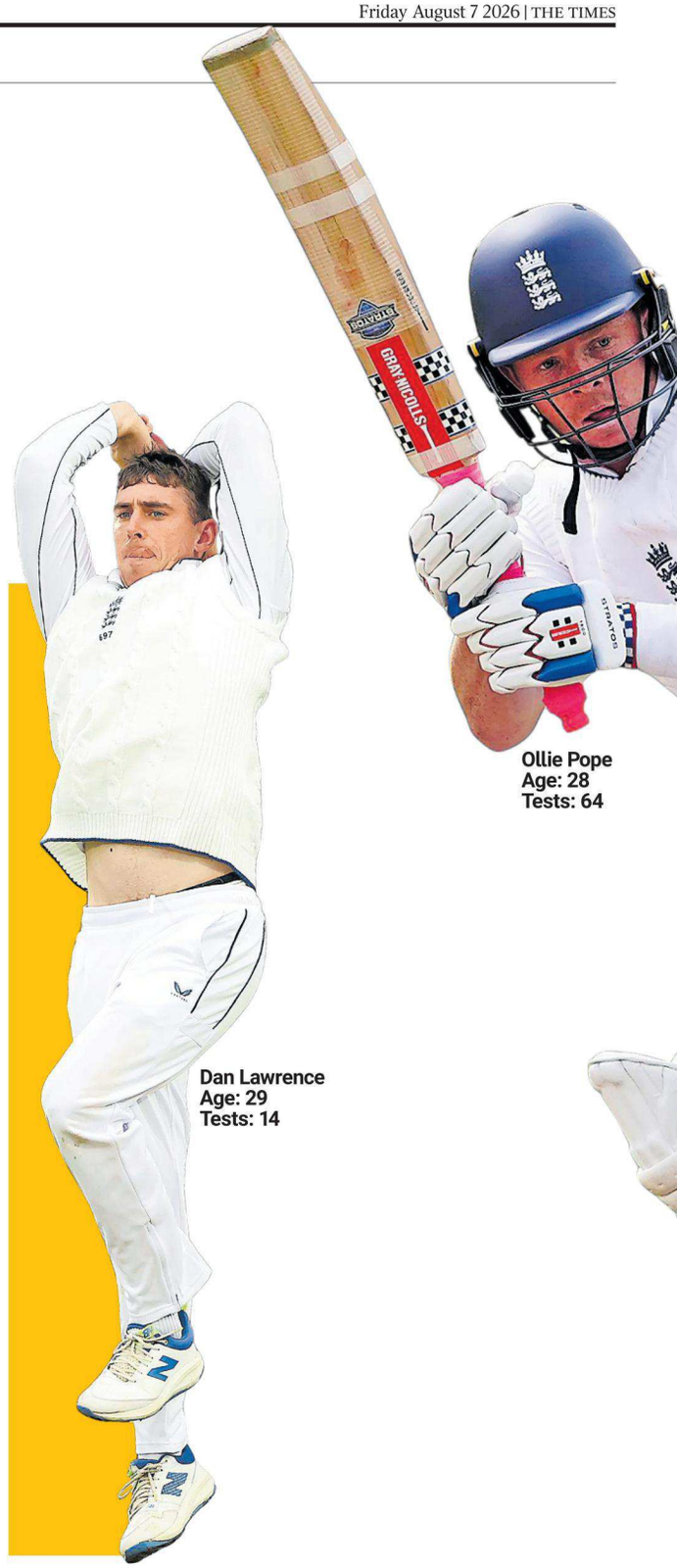
That match against Sri Lanka in 2024, Lawrence's last in England colours, was when the Bazball project started to go wrong: it was three days before that game that McCullum's brief was extended to take in the white-ball role; the inclusion of Josh Hull suggested a selection environment that had become too carried away with its own cleverness, and defeat by eight wickets, having been 140 for one on the first day, demonstrated a lack of due care and attention.

Ollie Pope was captain in that match and scored the sixth of his nine Test hundreds so far. His decline since the last of those hundreds coincided with ten Tests against India and Australia and resulted in his dropping after the Ashes. Now he has been brought back, albeit as a spare batsman/wicketkeeper. Pope's return gives a clue to what they are thinking as back-up to Jamie Smith with a winter tour to South Africa looming.

Pope's return is not good news for James Rew, who fluffed his opportunity against New Zealand. There were two routes into this squad for Rew, as No 3 (taken by Cox) or the spare batsman-cum-wicketkeeper (Pope), but he has been ignored after a poor match with gloves and bat on debut. No player should ever be judged on one match alone — Cook's return to the squad after one poor Test against Zimbabwe is a reminder of that — but first impressions count and Rew did not make a good one.

Although Stephen Fleming, the new coach, does not take up his responsibilities until the autumn, he joined these selection meetings remotely and had a little input. Many have expressed a degree of unhappiness that he does not start sooner, although taking some time to get his feet under the table, to watch and then consider what needs to be done with the team and the coaching staff is no bad thing. As this squad suggests, he has a lot of work to do.

England v Pakistan
First Test, Headingley, starts August 19
TV: Sky Sports Main Event/Cricket



Ollie Pope
Age: 28
Tests: 64

Dan Lawrence
Age: 29
Tests: 14

England squad for Test series v Pakistan

	Age	Tests	Runs	Bat ave	100s	Wkts	Bowl ave
Jofra Archer (Sussex)	31	20	293	**10.10**	0	71	**28.97**
Gus Atkinson (Surrey)	28	18	513	**19.73**	1	79	**23.27**
Shoaib Bashir (Derbyshire)	22	21	106	**7.57**	0	71	**39.42**
Harry Brook (Yorkshire)	27	38	3,395	**53.04**	10	1	**123.00**
Brydon Carse (Durham)	31	14	357	**17.85**	0	58	**30.18**
Sam Cook (Essex)	29	1	0	**0**	0	1	**119.00**
Jordan Cox (Essex)	25	1	52	**26.00**	0	–	**–**
Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire)	31	46	3,320	**40.00**	7	–	**–**
Matthew Fisher (Surrey)	28	2	50	**50.00**	0	6	**31.83**
Emilio Gay (Durham)	26	3	139	**23.16**	0	–	**–**
Dan Lawrence (Surrey)	29	14	671	**26.84**	0	3	**44.33**
Ollie Pope (Surrey)	28	64	3,732	**34.55**	9	–	**–**
Ollie Robinson (Sussex)	32	21	440	**14.66**	0	83	**21.91**
Joe Root (Yorkshire, captain)	35	166	14,114	**50.58**	41	74	**48.09**
†Jamie Smith (Surrey)	26	22	1,387	**39.62**	2	–	**–**
Josh Tongue (Nottinghamshire)	28	12	68	**4.85**	0	57	**29.56**

First Test: Aug 19-23 (Headingley). **Second: Aug 27-31** (Lord's). **Third: Sept 9-13** (Edgbaston).

Curran is in line for recall – when fit

CONTINUED FROM BACK

championship this season with 788, at an average of 65.66.

Lawrence has not played a Test since September 2024 and was not part of England's Ashes squad but his inclusion gives England an option for a spinning all-rounder to bat in the lower middle order as they look at how they balance the side after the retirement of Ben Stokes. The 29-year-old will bat at No 6, with the wicketkeeper Jamie Smith returning to No 7, having batted

one spot higher during the New Zealand series.

Cox, 25, made his Test debut batting at No 7, coming into the side for the second Test against New Zealand when Stokes and Gus Atkinson were both suspended after the late-night incident at a Chelsea nightclub.

He was supposed to make his debut in 2024 when he was due to keep wicket in New Zealand with Smith on paternity leave, only to break his finger in the nets on the eve of the first Test, which allowed Bethell to come in to make his debut at No 3. Cox has batted at No 3 in only one first-class match, having opened in 30 innings.

Marcus North, England's head selector, has revealed that the Surrey all-rounder Sam Curran is in line for a Test recall for the third match of the Pakistan series, and only missed out on selection for the first two Tests because of concerns around his fitness.

Curran, 28, has not played a Test match since 2021.

"With the retirement of Ben Stokes, it's quite clear that he provided us with a certain balance in the team," North said. "Sam Curran is certainly a player of interest for us. Sam has had a really heavy workload this summer, playing a tremendous amount of cricket. We don't feel physically he's quite right there, and I think it would be unfair to put him into these first two Tests."

The Essex seam bowler Sam Cook has also earned a recall, having made his debut against Zimbabwe last summer but not featured since. Durham's Brydon Carse has also been included.

The squad has been named for the first two Tests against Pakistan, at Headingley and Lord's, and this will be Joe Root's first series in charge since being reappointed as red-ball captain. Marcus Trescothick, England's assistant coach, will take the reins for this series because the new permanent head coach, Stephen Fleming, has family commitments in New Zealand. North said that Fleming had been fully involved in the selection decisions.

Brendon McCullum, the man Fleming replaced as Test head coach, has backed the appointment of his former team-mate.

"I think Flem will be excellent," McCullum, speaking for the first time since Fleming's appointment, said. "He's a little bit like me but better."

Ollie Robinson, who returned to the Test side for the first time in two years at the start of the New Zealand series, keeps his place in the squad. Jofra Archer, Matthew Fisher, Atkinson and Josh Tongue — along with Cook, Carse and Robinson — gives England plenty of options and North confirmed that they were likely to pick a four-man seam attack. Rehan Ahmed, the leg-spinning all-rounder, has been omitted.

West Ham agreement clears path for World Championships bid

Athletics

Matt Lawton
Chief Sports Correspondent

London has submitted its bid for the World Athletics Championships in September 2029, having resolved issues with West Ham United over stadium access and the possible disruption of fixtures.

The bid was in jeopardy over an apparent impasse when West Ham cited London Stadium legal agreements that they argued gave them priority during the football season.

But The Times understands an agreement has been reached that is acceptable to West Ham as well as an understanding that the championships can take place with minimal impact on the club's fixtures, such is the speed with which the stadium seating can now be modified for athletics.

They believe it would mean no more than two consecutive away games in the Premier League or three in the EFL. There is also a commitment to enhance the long-term stadium experience for West Ham fans with certain improvements made.

Every possible scenario has been considered with regard to fixture disruption, whether West Ham are still in the Championship or back in the Premier League and competing in Europe.

Discussions involving the club, key figures at Athletics Ventures (AV), the joint organisation that acts for elite British athletics, stadium officials, government officials and the London mayor's office, have been going on for well over a year.

But significant progress has been made in more recent months, with West Ham keen to be good stadium partners while recognising the government's desire to hold a high-profile international event that will provide a massive boost to the economy. The 2017 championships were a significant financial success, with 60,000 sell-outs for every session. It should put the London proposal ahead of rival bids from Rome and Munich and a possible bid from India, with German officials already citing concern around costs.

Lord Coe, the president of World Athletics, wants the championships to bring the curtain down on the athletics season, and staging the event in September presented a problem to London.

That, however, has now been resolved, with a statement from West Ham reading: "West Ham United can confirm it has reached an agreement with London Stadium LLP and Athletics Ventures for London Stadium to be included as a host venue as part of a UK government-backed bid to hold the 2029 World Athletics Championships in London.

"Any impact on the football schedule will be confirmed once it is known which division and other competitions West Ham United will be competing in during the 2029-30 season. Further discussions with the relevant football governing bodies can then take place to review and mitigate against any potential impact on the fixture schedule."

A statement from Athletics Ventures confirmed that "the final documents to World Athletics for its bid to bring the World Athletics Championships to London in 2029" had been submitted.

Jack Buckner, the chief executive of UK Athletics and co-founder of AV, said: "We're delighted that we have reached agreement with the London Stadium and West Ham United and our sincere thanks for their commitment in making this happen."

Hugh Brasher, the chief executive of London Marathon Events and co-founder of AV, added: "The 2029 World Athletics Championships in London would drive more than £400 million in economic and social benefit in the capital and nationwide."

A spokesman for Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, said: "The mayor believes that hosting the World Athletics Championships at the London Stadium in 2029 would build on the city's long history of hosting the most prestigious sporting events.

"Sadiq is determined that, should London's bid be successful next month, this opportunity delivers long-term benefits for Londoners."

World Athletics is scheduled to announce the host city for the 2029 World Athletics Championships in September.

Sullivan to defy advice and attend first game of season

CONTINUED FROM BACK

women's teams for three years over safeguarding concerns.

West Ham have been told that Sullivan will attend tomorrow's game, the club's first since the investigation was published, and also since supporters turned on him after relegation from the Premier League on the final day of the season. He left the directors' box early that day during a victory over Leeds United that was not enough to keep them up. He has regularly attended home matches since he first obtained a stake in 2010.

The supporters' group said it had raised concerns that Sullivan's presence would be unwelcome by many fans and could require increased security at a time when the club and stadium face financial pressures. It said that his attendance risked reigniting tensions.

This week the stadium operator said that it had sought information to ensure it could fulfil its own safeguarding responsibilities and that West Ham had told the operator that "it does not consider there to be an ongoing safeguarding risk associated with Mr Sullivan attending the stadium".

Sullivan, West Ham's largest shareholder, is open to selling his 38.8 per cent stake — which may lead to a takeover of the club. He has benefited from Amanda Staveley's attempts to obtain a stake in the club — as it has provided him with two potential buyers for his stake. Namely, Staveley and Daniel Kretinsky, the Royal Mail owner and the club's second-largest shareholder and co-chairman with 27 per cent.

Staveley agreed to buy a 25.1 per cent stake from the late David Gold's family for £150 million. However, Sullivan may be due an inflated price if Kretinsky surpasses a 50 per cent stake, under a clause in a past agreement.

Sport

Rugby's heading for trouble

Brain injury case harming sport that already has image problem

Alex Lowe, Pages 60-61

Uefa doubles down to get Infantino out

European governing body says Fifa boycott still stands as under-fire president refuses to resign

Martyn Ziegler
Sports News Reporter of the Year

Uefa has laid down the gauntlet to Gianni Infantino by saying its boycott of Fifa tournaments still stands.

The European governing body said Infantino had not provided necessary assurances about the future. The Fifa president is refusing to resign after the fallout from the collapse of his plan to sell stakes in the World Cup to private investors.

Uefa's position is likely to cause some alarm among Infantino's circle, who had hoped opposition to him remaining in power would die down. The English FA has also said that nothing has changed in relation to its position on Infantino — that he should resign — and has sent a letter withdrawing its previous endorsement of his re-election next year.

Sources also said many Concacaf federations — countries in north and central America and the Caribbean — have been deeply unimpressed with Infantino's latest statement and have lost confidence in his presidency.

A Uefa statement said: "Uefa's associations were very clear about the conditions attached to the non-participation in Fifa competitions.

"First, the proposals to sell off the major competitions had to be withdrawn and secondly, assurances have to be made that such attempts to disfigure the game in this way will never be made again.

"These conditions have not been met. In addition, Uefa made it abundantly clear in its statement on Saturday that it has lost confidence in Gianni Infantino's presidency. That position holds.

"Yesterday's announcement that some people employed by the Fifa president [and whose careers depend on his favour] agree with him changes nothing."

All 55 Uefa member nations voted on Friday to boycott Fifa competitions in protest against Infantino's scheme. European teams, including England, are due to feature in the Under-20 Women's World Cup in Poland next month.

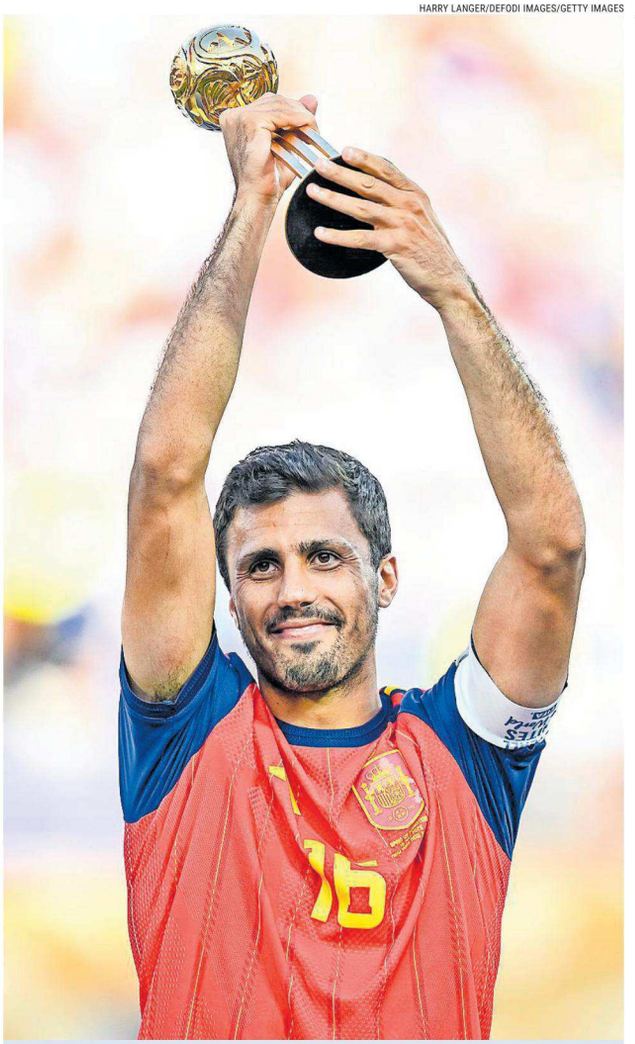
The final part of the Uefa statement refers to a letter sent by Infantino to Fifa Council members after he called a meeting of his senior management in Rabat, Morocco, on Wednesday. He did not invite Fifa's chief operating officer, Kevin Lamour, the No 3 in the organisation, after his critical comments last week about the sell-off plan, while Arsène Wenger, Fifa's head of global football development, did not attend and neither did Jill Ellis, Fifa's chief football officer.

Infantino is refusing to resign despite widespread calls for him to quit, but his decision to apologise and admit there were "mistakes" in his scheme is seen as a sign of his desperate situation with former allies refusing to endorse him.

To add to the pressure on him, Canada's prime minister, Mark Carney, said the sell-off plan "should be fatal"

Continued on page 62

HARRY LANGER/DEFODI IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



Barcelona enter race for Rodri

Manchester City star, the player of tournament at this summer's World Cup with Spain, is being courted by both Catalans and Real. The Madrid club tied Vinícius Jr to a new deal yesterday amid Arsenal interest, pages 62-63

Sullivan plans West Ham visit

Gary Jacob

David Sullivan is expected to defy advice and attend West Ham United's opening match of the season at the London Stadium tomorrow.

The stadium's operators had recommended that the club's co-owner not be at home matches because of the potential for fan unrest after allegations made against him of sexual misconduct, which he denies.

West Ham's fan advisory board also called for him to stay away from the Carabao Cup first-round tie against Portsmouth.

Sullivan resigned as director and joint chairman of West Ham in June, shortly before the publication of the joint Times and BBC Panorama investigation into his behaviour, which revealed he has been banned from contact with the club's youth and

Continued on page 65

Cox replaces injured Bethell

Elizabeth Ammon

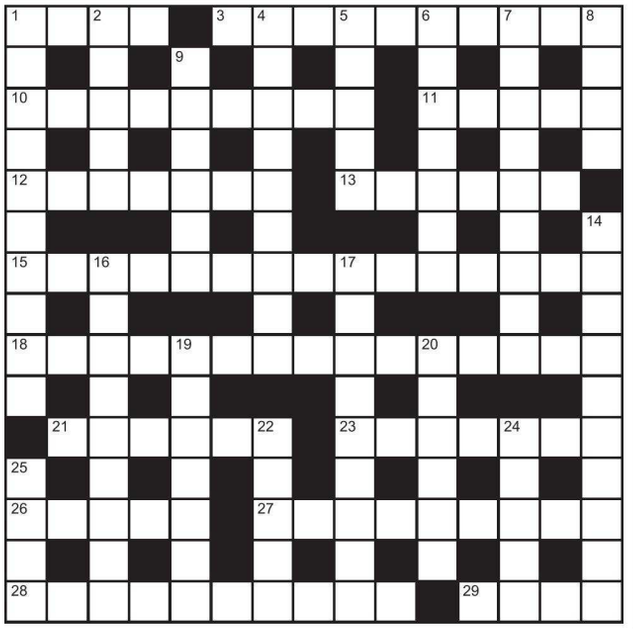
Jacob Bethell will miss England's Test series against Pakistan because of a knee injury and will be replaced at No 3 by Jordan Cox.

Bethell, 22, picked up an injury to his right knee during the final one-day international against India last month and was ruled out of the Hundred but has not recovered in time for this three-match series, which begins on August 19 at Headingley.

England have also given a surprise recall to Ollie Pope. The Surrey batsman was dropped from the Test squad after the Ashes but has had a solid season in the County Championship, averaging 43 in eight matches. He is joined in the 16-man squad by his Surrey team-mate Dan Lawrence, who is the second-highest runscorer in the

Continued on page 64

Times Crossword 29,615



ACROSS

1 Display of gender inequality encapsulates current peeve (4)
3 Suspect due bail holding everyone back is not to be praised (10)
10 Tanner starting run beats hides hard (9)
11 Weak king charges let down (5)
12 Concerned about animal enclosure suffering infestation (7)
13 Fluid consumed in address regularly visited for bevvies (6)
15 Route some time entered by you and a learner bearing west (4,11)
18 Train old falcon not to turn aggressive (15)
21 Inn employee initially ignored person shoving (6)
23 Domes, 13 shelters on high (7)
26 Rejecting outsiders, chap with his land (5)
27 Horseman in a party I'm unsure should be in company (9)
28 Semiaquatic creature spiked rump badly (10)
29 Shrub male insect snubbed (4)

DOWN

1 Bad behaviour of several types on Tube (10)
2 Attack in sports bar of criminal associate (5)
4 See female perhaps show liking for opera (9)
5 Passion visible in commercial broadcast (5)
6 Mocking of French cooking, but having no right (7)
7 Helps nursing large sickly-looking bird (5,4)
8 Like fish caught somewhere in East Anglia (4)
9 Great sources for research into construction material (6)
14 Very large cat tucked into round lamprey, perhaps (10)
16 Case in Antrim settled, in which one is reprieved (9)
17 Befuddled gent barred from drunken celebrating is crabby (9)
19 Cylindrical package Vicky unwrapped is carpet (7)
20 Essentially flimsy ashen stick (6)
22 Go over river with mounting speed (5)
24 Say romance is gripping subject (5)
25 Tungsten half of striking tool forcibly hit (4)

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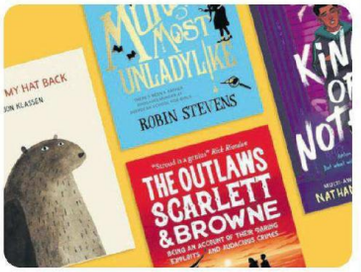

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THE TIMES

2 ARTS

August 7 | **2026**

I'm 93 and it's time to leave the stage

Siân Phillips on the moment she forgot her lines

the arts column

Richard Morrison

It's my 50th time going to the Edinburgh Fringe — this is how it's changed

Everyone has a favourite summer ritual. I'm no good with barbecues: I always burn the sausages. And my neck gets tired watching the tennis at Wimbledon. But tomorrow I will do something I have loved doing every summer for half a century. I will board a train at King's Cross station and head north to the Edinburgh festival — which, ridiculously, will be the 50th in a row that I have covered as a journalist.

It says something about the event that I still feel something of the anticipatory tingle I had in 1977 when (sent to review events by a tiny arts magazine that sadly went bust this year) I stepped off the night train from London at about 5.30am on a typical Scottish summer morning: thick mist, thermometer hovering around zero, steady drizzle.

Sleepless and soaked, I staggered along Princes Street wondering how to kill time until a café opened for breakfast. I need not have worried. Down by the bandstand a dozen eerie figures seemed to be performing what sounded strangely like Shakespeare. Unmistakable phrases, bitingly apt for the conditions, came drifting across the flowerbeds. "So foul and fair a day I have not seen... this place is too cold for hell."

And thus I found myself reviewing my first Fringe show — an all-night continuous loop of *Macbeth* done by students from some Midwestern university. They were also, if memory serves, putting on a "hilarious rewrite" of Euripides called *The Bacchae with Buttocks*.

For the first time I realised what draws crowds to Edinburgh each August and makes the festival unique. Not the vast number of performances (more than 50,000 this year). It's the sheer crazy incongruity of the experience: the feeling that around every corner is something that would at least surprise you and maybe even change your life.

On that first day I dashed around half a dozen Fringe shows like a whirling dervish. Then in the evening I went to the old King's Theatre (wonderfully restored this year, incidentally) to see probably the most star-studded staging of *Carmen* assembled — Placido Domingo and Teresa Berganza heading the cast, with Claudio Abbado conducting.

The wacky zeitgeist of Edinburgh at festival time worked its magic even on those exalted figures. While they were at the festival Abbado and Domingo recruited some operatic chums and challenged the London Symphony Orchestra to a football match out on the Meadows. I can't remember who won, but I do remember the tackles were vicious. Where else would a back-desk violinist get the chance to give the world's highest-paid tenor a good kicking?

Based on those hazy memories it's tempting to say that festival time in Edinburgh is duller now than 50 years ago. But you could argue the opposite. In 1977 Edinburgh was still a prim

Presbyterian fortress where, even during the festival, the pubs shut at 10.30pm and didn't open at all on Sundays. And the International Festival was also painfully staid. It had been set up in 1947 to rival Salzburg's snooty summer festival, and in the 1970s it still strived for that elitist aura.

By contrast, the Fringe in the 1970s was still overwhelmingly run by students and amateurs. Yes, a few were on the verge of TV or theatrical fame. But until the 1990s the scene wasn't dominated, as it is now, by commercial promoters running slick venues for big-name comedians charging West End prices. The atmosphere was more happy-go-lucky, anarchic and genuinely provocative.

One actress who briefly appeared nude at the festival in those innocent days was actually prosecuted for indecency — a scandal inevitably dubbed the "Lady McChatterley case" by the Scottish press. It seems unbelievable now.

> **My first review was of an all-night loop of Macbeth**

But what has chiefly changed the festival's character is money — specifically the enormous amount you need to attend either as a spectator or a performer on the Fringe. Perhaps I am viewing the past through rose-tinted spectacles, but I don't recall the hotels, landlords and ordinary citizens of 1970s Edinburgh being anything like as ruthless as they are now about fleecing festival visitors.

These days you are doing well if you can find a broom cupboard in which to sleep for under £200 a night. Pay to see three or four Fringe shows a day and you will burn through another £500 in a week, while performers can easily spend £5,000 renting even a small-scale venue for a short run of performances.

The inevitable consequence is that, apart from that tiny minority of big-name stand-ups, nobody makes money appearing on the Edinburgh Fringe today. Indeed, the vast majority of performers will be many hundreds of pounds out of pocket. Some, of course, will write that off as an investment in the future showbiz careers they hope to have. Either way, it has changed the atmosphere.

How different it all was in 1947. "May I assure you," wrote John Falconer, lord provost of Edinburgh, in the first festival brochure, "that this festival is not a commercial undertaking in any way." Rather, he went on, it aimed to promote "a new way of life centred round the arts". Just two years after suffering the destruction and despair of world war, audiences could "refresh their souls and reaffirm their belief in things other than material".

Such sentiments may seem naive today. Yet for all its crass commercial aspects, Edinburgh at festival time still retains a sliver of that idealistic spirit. For one month each year a city does turn itself over to the creative arts and those who delight in them. It welcomes hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world.

The crowds on the packed streets around the buskers are overwhelmingly good-natured. And whether highbrow or populist, the performances are often revelatory. That's why you will find this ancient hack on the Edinburgh train tomorrow morning, as eager to plunge into the festive pleasures of Auld Reekie in 2026 as on that foggy dawn in 1977.

How Tomdaya pulled off a billion-dollar summer

Husband and wife A-listers Tom Holland and Zendaya are in both The Odyssey and Spider-Man. Their dominance is unprecedented. By Damian Whitworth

Cinema owners didn't need special spidey senses last weekend to detect that Tom Holland and Zendaya had caught millions of filmgoers in their web. *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* produced $932 million in ticket sales on its first weekend, the second-biggest global opening weekend yet.

And with *The Odyssey*, which also stars the married couple, continuing to fill cinemas ($136 million on its third weekend) Tomdaya's billion-dollar Spidyssey weekend led experts to declare a box office phenomenon.

Two back-to-back summer blockbusters starring a husband and wife is the cinematic equivalent of Halley's comet, says Paul Dergarabedian, head of marketplace trends at Rentrack, a box office analytics company.

"The planets aligned perfectly in a way that created this monumental weekend. To movie theatre owners Tom Holland and Zendaya are the superheroes," says Dergarabedian, who is based in Los Angeles. "It's so unique and unusual. I don't think we'll see this exact scenario play out again."

Plenty of married couples have met on set and turned romances into marriages, and sometimes — Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall; Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton — these become landmarks of Hollywood glamour.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, who met filming *Mr & Mrs Smith*, were a portmanteau name — Brangelina — long before Holland and Zendaya. "But *Mr & Mrs Smith* wasn't a blockbuster," Dergarabedian says. "You've had other married stars but never in back-to-back summer blockbusters. It's totally unprecedented." (He notes that Jon Bernthal is also in both films, as Menelaus and The Punisher.)

In four Spider-Man films since 2017, Holland has played Peter Parker, the teenage boy who becomes the superhero, opposite Zendaya, his high-school sweetheart, MJ. The latest film raked in £23.5 million in its first weekend in the UK, the fourth-biggest opening here.

The Times critic Kevin Maher wrote that the couple "inject extraordinary levels of ache and longing" into scenes, nudging the film into the realm of "impossible love" classics such as *Brief Encounter*.

Suggestions that the biggest draw of a Spider-Man movie is the character of Spider-Man, who is by far the most popular in the Marvel universe, is unfair, says Charles Gant, box office editor at Screen International.

"You haven't got a franchise without a really good Spider-Man and Tom Holland is a brilliant Spider-Man. He's naturally funny. He's charismatic. He brings a vulnerability and fragility to the role. Hollywood had moved away from the notion that cast drove box office — it was driven by the superhero characters.

"We are maybe moving a little bit back towards the direction of the on-screen talent and Zendaya and Tom Holland are absolutely at the forefront of that. *The Odyssey* and this Spider-Man film are bringing audiences back in droves. They are unicorn films."

It would be a stretch to say that Tomdaya are the main draw of *The Odyssey*. Holland has a chunky role as Telemachus, but Zendaya has just a few minutes on screen as the goddess Athena. They are members of a high-powered ensemble of supporting characters to Matt Damon's Odysseus and the biggest star is the director. "Look at that cast — and the first name rolling off the tongue is Christopher Nolan. Nolan is a draw," Dergarabedian says.

But Nolan also knew that Holland and Zendaya could reach a Gen Z audience. "I was in the cinema watching the Michael Jackson film and *The Odyssey* trailer came on and there were these young women sitting next to me," Gant says. "When Tom Holland came on the screen they absolutely perked up. Christopher Nolan's so smart. Tom Holland was, forgive the pun, a Trojan horse into that younger demographic."

Holland, 30, grew up in Kingston, southwest London, the son of

SHUTTERSTOCK

Dominic, a stand-up comic, and Nikki, a photographer. His break came at the age of 12 when he played Billy Elliot in the West End musical and then two years later he shot his film debut with Naomi Watts and Ewan McGregor in *The Impossible*, about the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Zendaya Coleman, 29, from Oakland, California, is the daughter of teachers, and was a child model and dancer before becoming the teen star of a Disney series, *Shake It Up*, and then being cast in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* in 2017.

That year she also appeared in the musical *The Greatest Showman*, with Hugh Jackman and Zac Efron. As well as the Spider-Man films she has a main role in Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* franchise and was paid a reported $10 million for *Challengers*, the psychosexual tennis drama.

For her role as a drug addict in the HBO series *Euphoria*, she won two Emmy awards. This year she starred opposite Robert Pattinson in a well-received indie film, *The Drama*. Her off-screen earnings are formidable, including brand ambassadorships with Prada Beauty and On, the sportswear brand. Her Instagram game is premier league level — she has 177 million followers and follows no one.

Her "method dressing" on red carpets involves outfits that reference the films she is in, such as the ivory gown she wore to the recent London premiere of *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* that had web-like threads. Holland also has a Prada fragrance ambassadorship and has founded a non-alcoholic beer line, Bero, after giving up booze.

They met at a reading to see if they had the right chemistry for *Spider-Man: Homecoming*. For a long time they were discreet about their relationship and it was not confirmed that they had got married earlier this year until some time after the event.

Where and when they got married remain unclear. As far as anyone can tell, the wedding did not involve a multi-day celebration in Sicily (Callum Turner and Dua Lipa style), or hiring Madison Square Garden, like Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce. Holland did confirm that his family were all there. Then yesterday it was reported they had a wedding reception on Tuesday at The Beaverbrook hotel in Surrey.

> **Christopher Nolan knew that they could reach a Gen Z audience**

When they promote movies together they appear delighted to be collaborating professionally. On the red carpet for *Spider-Man* he called her "Zee" and "my MJ" and she spoke of them being "best friends". He has called her "the most down to earth, regular, easygoing girl you'll ever meet".

In Paris to promote *Spider-Man*, they were surprised by a flashmob of young kids singing *Titanium* by David Guetta. "So adorable," Zendaya seemed to mouth at her husband. Holland has said that once he has children he will stop making films, which must have set off alarm bells in studio boardrooms.

In an interview this year with Esquire he said: "It's really nice to have a bedrock of a relationship that will stand the test of time. We can support each other in ways that only we can, because only we understand what it's like to live this life."

They do a good line in un-starry mini confessions, such as Holland's admission that he was "intimidated' to meet Nolan for the first time and was still "kind of pinching myself" that he had been cast in *The Odyssey*.

When not filming, they live a low-key life, mostly at the Victorian house in Richmond, southwest London, that Holland bought some years ago. Occasionally, they are spotted in Waitrose or walking in Richmond Park with Noon, their miniature schnauzer. "They have an authenticity," Gant says.

"He's your family neighbourhood actor," Dergarabedian says, referencing the "family neighbourhood Spider-Man" catchphrase. "Everybody seems to love the guy. She's a really good actor. They're four-quadrant movie stars: they appeal to little kids, teenagers, adults, and grandma and grandpa. Their appeal is universal."

Dergarabedian calls Holland and Zendaya the "$20 billion couple" because they have jointly been involved in movies that have earned that much at the box office.

They are each big enough stars that they don't need to work together again, but given they seem to enjoy it — and the studios love it— no one would bet against it. Next for him is a biopic of Fred Astaire.

She has *Shrek 5* out next year but has said she hopes to take a tiny breather. Meanwhile, there is speculation that Holland could make a cameo in the film *Avengers: Doomsday*, which will be released in December on the same day as the third *Dune* movie, starring his wife. "Maybe lightning could strike twice in the same year," Dergarabedian says.

If Heston's Fat Duck closes I shall be sad

The chef's three-Michelin-star hotspot is £365 a head and solidly booked. Is it under threat, asks Tony Turnbull

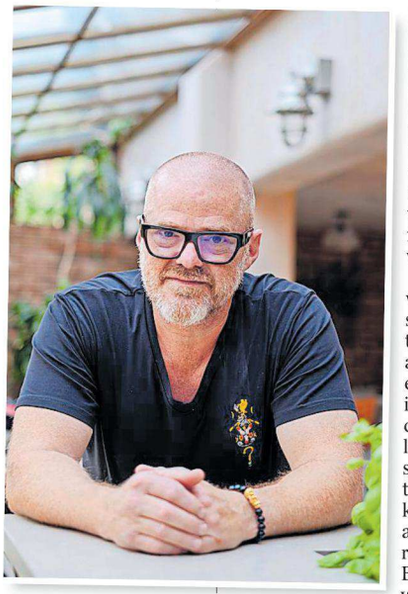
They are not the words anyone wants to hear when booking a table for a special meal several months hence — especially not one where you have to pay in full in advance — but Heston Blumenthal's restaurant group has warned that "material uncertainty" lingers over its ability to keep trading. Which means that bagging a table at his three-Michelin-star Fat Duck may not be quite the golden ticket you had hoped.

Despite a cash injection from the Singaporean businesswoman Christina Ong, directors have warned that there is "significant doubt on the group's or the parent company's ability to continue as a going concern".

To which most people will ask: how can it possibly be that a restaurant that charges a minimum of £365 a head and which has solid bookings for months is not making a good return?

Operating in this elevated stratosphere of dining has always been a precarious business, one where staffing and ingredient costs can rapidly spiral out of control. Indeed, Blumenthal admitted that before the restaurant was awarded its third star in 2004, he was so stretched that he had enough money in the bank only to cover the following week's wages.

LOLA LAURENT



Heston Blumenthal

That third star well and truly saved him. It traditionally allows chefs to enter a magical international circuit, taking on lucrative sponsorship deals that help them to keep the lights on at the flagship restaurant. Blumenthal's widely reported mental health issues have likely affected his earning power.

There is also the question of changing desires. The "experiences" at the Fat Duck, from the Journey to the Mindful Experience, typically stretch to 14 courses; this age of weight-loss drugs and reduced appetites will dent the appeal of such a blow-out.

I for one would be saddened to see the Fat Duck close. I recently rated my first trip to Bray, Berkshire, back in 2002, just before the second Michelin star, as one of the best of my life. Blumenthal was as much a conjuror as a chef and the thrill of nitro-poached aperitifs that had us snorting like a dragon has always stayed with me.

I went back again a couple of years ago and while there were fewer fireworks I was still impressed by how determined they were to put on a good show. You pay your money and they entertain you royally over four hours. The greatest show on earth? Maybe not, but still the best one you will see in a dining room.

> **When I first went he was as much a conjuror as a chef**

cover story

‘I’ve had a good innings — I’m not sad to quit the theatre’

Siân Phillips tells Clive Davis about 82 years on the stage, I, Claudius, marriage to Peter O’Toole — and the shock when her ‘phenomenal memory’ failed her

COVER: ANDREW CROWLEY/CAMERA PRESS. BELOW: DONALD COOPER/ALAMY

Siân Phillips breaks the news over lunch at a French bistro in Covent Garden. There’s nothing dramatic about her announcement; she simply explains, almost in passing, that the time has come. After almost 70 years, as far as full-scale live performances are concerned, it really is the end of the road. The actress has always prided herself on her memory, and it was, she says, a lapse earlier this year that prompted her decision.

At rehearsals for Chichester Festival Theatre’s staging of the Ian McEwan novel *Atonement*, in which she played the elderly version of the central character, Briony Tallis, she found she could no longer remember her lines. “It happened quite suddenly,” Phillips says. “I thought, ‘This is odd, it’s not going in the same way that it usually does.’ The director [Adam Penford] is a lovely man. We laughed about it.

“So we thought we’d try a bud in the ear, which I’ve heard actors have used. But it came undone. I was halfway through this enormous speech of four, five sides and I thought, ‘What comes next?’ I looked at the girl who was going to prompt me. I couldn’t hear her. I looked at the director, and he said, ‘This isn’t going to work, is it?’”

Siân Phillips with her second husband, Peter O’Toole, in 1964. Right, clockwise from main: Phillips in Great Expectations in 2005; with Brian Blessed in I, Claudius in 1976; with Lou Gish in Marlene in 1997

Phillips says she still plans to give performances of *It’s All Greek*, her bijou show about the ancient Greeks. A spry 93, she is also scheduled to perform a Samuel Beckett miniature, *Rockaby*, for Michael Sheen’s new Welsh National Theatre next year (she’ll record most of the monologue, lasting 15 minutes or so, in advance). Oh, and she’ll still go on the road with her occasional evenings of reminiscences hosted by the director Richard Digby Day.

So it could have been a traumatic moment, but Phillips seems to have taken it in her stride. Perhaps the two decades she spent married to Peter O’Toole, the ultimate hard-living, hard-drinking actor, endowed her with an extra layer of resilience. “I wasn’t a bit depressed,” she recalls. “I mean, we laughed and laughed about it. But I thought, no, this is silly, it’s too much responsibility. It might have gone right again but I couldn’t take a chance. I’m not sad at all, which surprises me. I figure I’ve had a good innings.

That’s an understatement for a career that has ranged from *Cabaret* to *Calendar Girls*, encompassing lead roles in *Hedda Gabler* and *Saint Joan*, and playing Marlene Dietrich in the musical *Marlene* (for which she was nominated for an Olivier and a Tony award) and Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*.

“I’ve always had a phenomenal memory,” she continues. “That’s why it was a bit of a shock. I would read something once and it was there. I never sat down to learn anything. Even as a child, my mother would give me something, a piece of the Bible to do in chapel, and I would read it, and I could do it.”

It’s hard to believe Phillips is in her nineties. She looks at least 15 years younger — partly the result, perhaps, of the many hours she has spent practising Pilates. In the BBC documentary made to mark her 90th birthday she was shown working out in her leotard with her coach, enduring the kind of joint manipulation that might make a 60-year-old flinch.

Forgetting lines is something that all actors dread. Conversation turns to another of Phillips’s colleagues, the great Shakespearean Michael Pennington, an actor with a forensic intellect who died in May, aged 82. Not long after lockdown I had seen him play Prospero in *The Tempest* at the tiny Jermyn Street Theatre in the West End. Pennington, who looked alarmingly frail, had needed a script in his hand, yet still gave a deeply moving performance.

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Siân Phillips performs *It's All Greek* at the Tabard, London, on Sep 27, Cambridge Arts Theatre on Oct 4 and New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, on Oct 8

Phillips encountered him later when she cut the cake for the traditional birthday celebration of Shakespeare at Denville Hall, the retirement home for stage professionals. "I was handing out bits," she recalls, "and suddenly a figure from the other end of the room got up and walked towards me. It was Michael. He launched into a page of Shakespeare, and I said, 'Oh my God, how lovely to see you.'

"He recited another one, a long, long piece, and I said, 'Oh, that's wonderful.' His memory was suddenly all there. And then he said, 'I'd love to stay but they're expecting me back in town.' It was awful. That was why he was in Denville Hall — he couldn't remember what he'd had for lunch."

In the early part of her career Phillips seemed destined to live in the shadow of another towering interpreter of Shakespeare. She and O'Toole had been a glamorous couple at Rada, but while Phillips had early stage success in her own right, it seemed to bring out the worst in her second husband (she divorced her first husband, Donald Roy, in 1959) with retrograde views about a woman's place. Once, when a journalist arrived at the family home to interview her, O'Toole sat in a corner of the room and pooh-poohed the idea that a wife would have a career of her own.

Booze made things much, much worse. Phillips, brought up as a chapel teetotaller, had to accustom herself to seeing the man she loved lurch from one drunken binge to another. As she wrote in *Public Places*, the second volume of her autobiography, she was so desperate to keep the marriage intact (they had two young daughters) that she became "part of a huge conspiracy directed towards protecting O'Toole from the painful consequences of his behaviour". His starring role in *Lawrence of Arabia* may have brought him international stardom, but he was always at the mercy of his demons.

The couple finally divorced in 1979. (She married her third husband, the actor Robin Sachs, soon after; they divorced in 1991). A few years before, Phillips, who had thrown herself into roles on TV, had starred in *I, Claudius*. Her portrayal of Livia, a matriarch who doles out poison along with an acid smile, made her a household name. Derek Jacobi in his screen anecdotes recalls how Phillips "could be very frightening, even when we knew we were all acting".

While she was working on the series O'Toole, too, was working on a Roman epic, the notorious version of *Caligula* financed by the Penthouse porn baron Bob Guccione. Phillips's memoir contains a memorable account of a visit to a studio where Helen Mirren, Malcolm McDowell and John Gielgud were marooned on a doomed venture: "John Gielgud stood there looking grand and pretending not to notice that the girls flanking him were bare-breasted and carrying dildos... It was so strange to leave the set of *I, Claudius* (which can't have cost much), which had been researched, old BBC-style, for a year before shooting began and to walk onto this huge set with all that Penthouse money behind it and where the actors were paid vastly more than any of us at home and to see it all going horribly wrong."

Reading is Phillips's other great passion. ("Some people say to me, 'You should try a bit of living.'") One way of using her newly acquired free time in her Barbican home, she muses, would be to write another book, this time focusing on the craft of acting. Her two elegant volumes of memoirs were, she confesses, written partly as a way of pre-empting that famous ex-husband of hers.

"I knew that O'Toole was going to write book three of his wonderful contract with this American publishing house," she says. [In the event a third volume never appeared.] "It had taken him ten years to write book one, I think. So I knew that he was due to come to our marriage, and I knew also he wouldn't remember anything about it, he wouldn't have kept anything, and he would just make it all up. So, I thought, right, I'd better get in quick."

It is, unbelievably, more than 80 years since she gave her first performance. Raised by Welsh-speaking parents in the Black Mountains, she won the National Eisteddfod at the age of 11, which led to acting roles at BBC Wales. Later she was a newsreader and continuity announcer at the Cardiff studios. "It was a lot of responsibility," she says, "especially as I couldn't actually tell the time. My mother never listened to me once because she thought I was going to make a mistake."

Like many actors of her generation she worries that younger performers have become too dependent on microphones and don't know how to project. The night before we meet, she says, she had been at a show at a small studio theatre where the cast were very good; even so half were inaudible. And she has many a tale of the golden age of the BBC's Television Centre where, in the early years, dramas went out live, stumbles and all. Later, working on a version of *The Oresteia*, Phillips found a way of making herself look even more fearsome.

"We had bald caps with wisps of hair," she says. "But then I found out that if you took bacon rind from your breakfast tray, cleaned it off a bit and stuck it on your hair, it would move in a horrid, horrid way. So we kept adding various things until we got a request to use a separate dining room because it was too revolting."

Bacon rind? Even the ever resourceful Livia would have hesitated to use that particular ingredient.

No, Mr Bond, I expect you to be different!

As producers drop hints about the next 007, Dominic Maxwell makes some suggestions

Is bookies' favourite Callum Turner "stirring and exciting and different" enough to be the new James Bond? Is Jacob Elordi? Jack Lowden from *Slow Horses*? Leo Suter from *Lynley*? How about good old Aaron Taylor-Johnson, or is it so long since he was first tipped that he already feels like yesterday's favourite, despite being only 36 — a year younger than Daniel Craig was when he was cast in the role in 2005?

Anyway, "stirring and exciting and different" is what we are promised from our new superspy by the American producer Amy Pascal, who is now running the franchise alongside the Brit David Heyman (who did the Harry Potter films too). Screen tests are happening this month and an announcement is likely, she suggested, by the end of the year.

So who stirs you, who excites you and what does "different" mean anyway? This is good stuff from Pascal, who has managed to make it all sound rather thrilling and hopeful without giving away anything at all. Does it mean Turner, who is also 36? Mr Dua Lipa isn't quite my idea of Bond, but then we probably need to get away from the Pierce Brosnan image of an outlandishly yet traditionally good-looking man. (So Aidan Turner, say, wouldn't be "different", would he?)

And Craig was certainly seen as "different" when he won the role ahead of the youngster Henry Cavill. It was not until the photographs emerged of him stepping out of the sea, ripped in his blue swimming trunks for a scene in *Casino Royale*, that the world started going "ooh" instead of "who?"

There has apparently been a run of bets on Cavill this week but his age, 43, may well disqualify him. Likewise the 53-year-old Idris Elba is now more the stuff of M than Bond. That should also rule out Tom Hardy, 48, who has been rumoured for the role since the Craig era, even if he's well known to the new film's writer, Steven Knight, creator of *Peaky Blinders*. Knight has been cooing recently about how "underrated" Ian Fleming's original books are: "tangibly real" yet "dreamlike" too.

Which, um, is well observed but doesn't help to narrow things down. The screen Bonds have always been a kind of variant on an alpha-male rugged smoothie but beyond that it's a role that exists halfway between what's on the page and what the actor brings to it. What counts as updating an archetype that began with the publication of *Casino Royale* in 1953 and which ended, for now, with the cheap pathos of killing him off at the end of *No Time to Die* in 2021? What counts as diluting it? He certainly doesn't have to be British but he does have to convince as British. Elordi, co-star of *Saltburn* and *Wuthering Heights*, could join George Lazenby in the Australian James Bonds club.

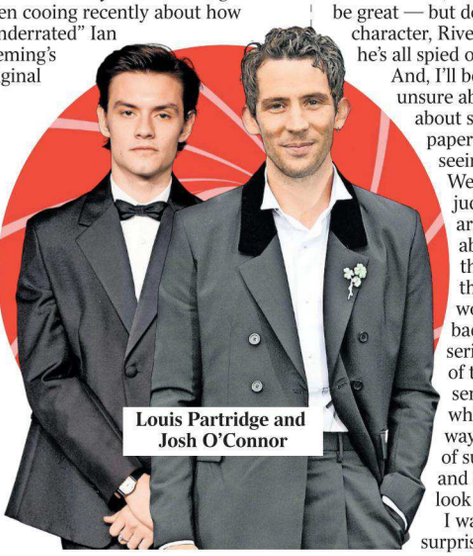
But would he be "stirring and exciting and different"? Is that code for either "someone you haven't really heard of" or "someone you have heard of but never really considered for Bond"? Remember that Clive Owen was once the favourite to succeed Pierce Brosnan and that Goran Visnjic from *ER* and the Australian actor Julian McMahon were also top contenders. Or how about excellent actors who are certainly not ugly and can really flaming act? Josh O'Connor, say. He is as plausible in *Disclosure Day* as he was in the latest *Knives Out*. He's in town in August anyway to rehearse a play at the Almeida in north London and er... OK, conjecture levels are heading into the red here.

Other names are being flung around: Tom Francis, so good in *Sunset Boulevard* on stage in London and New York opposite Nicole Scherzinger; Louis Partridge (*House of Guinness*, *Enola Holmes*), who at only 23 could still be playing the role into the 2050s, if that's what's wanted. Will our new guy also have to take part in TV spin-offs once the first film, directed by Denis Villeneuve (*Dune*), comes out?

As someone who likes Bond maybe a bit too much, I think Lowden would be great — but does his *Slow Horses* character, River Cartwright, mean he's all spied out?

And, I'll be honest, my being unsure about Turner is more about seeing him in the papers lately than it is seeing him on screen. We bring to these judgments ideas that are outside an actor's ability to be in front of the cameras blowing things up, kissing women, stabbing baddies, looking serious about the fate of the world, saying semi-funny things while kitesurfing his way across a river of sulphuric acid and making it all look natural.

I want to be pleasantly surprised, don't you?



Louis Partridge and Josh O'Connor

THE CRITICS

Would you like a murder with that? Yes, but also some wit

Evil ice cream turns children into psychos in this flimsy horror, says Ed Potton

COURTESY OF STUDIOCANAL

Ari Millen, as the silent ice-cream man, gives one of the few decent performances

Ice Cream Man
18, 86min
★★☆☆☆

It is, to be fair, a cracking premise: an evil ice-cream man whose frozen delights turn children into homicidal zombies. As in real life, the ice-cream van's music triggers a Pavlovian response, except here it's less "I must hassle Mum to buy me a cornet" and more "I must decapitate Mum with a hacksaw". You'll never think about Mr Whippy and strawberry splits in the same way again.

This ultimately cloying sundae of gruesomeness was directed and co-written by Eli Roth, the horror maestro behind the *Hostel* and *Cabin Fever* franchises. He and his horde of little monsters have a ball turning a candy-coloured suburban American town into a killing field.

The school principal has the top of his skull sliced off and his brain scooped into a cone, and the pint-sized psychos make enterprising use of their victims' intestines as cat's cradles and skipping ropes. "We do not bully!" a mother tells her death-dealing son, who responds by smashing her face in with a hammer. Kids these days... Afterwards they celebrate by doing floss dances and making "blood angels" on the floor.

Will viewers enjoy the film as much as the cast? Probably not. It's hardly scary at all and some of the acting is worse than the maiming, with the exceptions of Ari Millen as the silent ice-cream man and Charlie Zeltzer as the plucky Jared, whose lactose intolerance saves him from his classmates' fate.

This kind of thing needs a sharp script to go with the gore and there aren't enough zingers here. The most memorable line, which some will find too much, comes when a girl is trying to heave up the demonic ice cream to avoid turning into a zombie. "I'm a 12-year-old girl — of course I know how to make myself vomit," she says.

You also wonder about the ethics of children appearing in a film with an 18 certificate. The young actors and their parents were all "crazy horror fans", Roth told the Polygon website. "They've seen every episode of *The Walking Dead*." If you're familiar with *The Walking Dead*, which is barbaric, you'll know that's no kind of defence.

The satirical subtext, meanwhile, is vague. Are sugary, high-fat desserts the enemy? Or is it screens, given that the ice-cream man infects the kids' mobiles with creepy black-and-white cartoons? Roth has said the film is about the "primal fear of wanting to protect your child from the evils of the outside world and knowing that ultimately there's no way you can do that". That would at least explain the satisfyingly nihilistic finale.

In cinemas

the classic film

Practical Magic (1998)
12, 104min
★★★☆☆

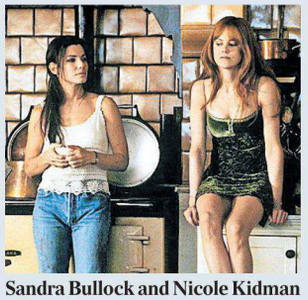
This syrupy supernatural romance was greeted with stinking reviews on its release. Since then, dark arts (and TikTok) have made it into a cult classic. So much so that its stars — Sandra Bullock, Nicole Kidman, Dianne Wiest and Stockard Channing — are reuniting in *Practical Magic 2* in September.

The first film caught Bullock at a sweet spot after her breakthrough in *Speed* but before the mega-stardom of *Miss Congeniality*. She plays Sally Owens, Kidman the tearaway Gillian, sisters from a line of witches, raised by eccentric aunts (Wiest and Channing) after a curse claims their parents. Sally quits magic until dealing with Gillian's abusive boyfriend (Goran Visnjic) requires it.

Griffin Dunne's film is a camp hotchpotch of comedy and thriller, with a reanimated corpse for good measure. Bullock and Kidman look like they're having a riot. Freed from *Eyes Wide Shut*, Kidman was ready to let her hair down, bringing her own tequila to the "midnight margaritas" scene. Men are plot devices and the true romance lies between the siblings and their female-led circle.

And now, by the pricking of my thumbs, a sequel this way comes... The trailer looks awful so it may well be another smash. **LI-Z**

Remastered and in cinemas



Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman

Love Me Tender
15, 134min
★★★★☆

There is something bewitchingly unknowable about Vicky Krieps. The Luxembourgish actress found fame in *Phantom Thread* opposite Daniel Day-Lewis, who reportedly said, "She scares me." She remains an open book who somehow keeps her character's essential secret to herself.

That mystery is what keeps you transfixed by *Love Me Tender*, Anna Cazenave Cambet's meandering French-language adaptation of Constance Debré's semi-autobiographical novel. Clémence (Krieps) spent 20 years married to Laurent, played by Antoine Reinartz, best known as the prosecutor in *Anatomy of a Fall*, a film that casts a shadow here. For three years after separating, they amicably shared custody of their son, Paul. So when Clémence informs Laurent, over a sunny café drink, that she has begun seeing women, she expects no great difficulty. She is catastrophically wrong.

Soon Clémence is trapped in a Kafkaesque legal custody battle in which Laurent's repeated transgressions are tolerated while her slightest misstep is disproportionately punished. She had left her marriage and her career as a lawyer to become a writer, a lesbian and more fully herself, and what's really on trial is her refusal to remain within patriarchal boundaries. How much of that must she surrender to be a mother? Many women will acutely relate.

Vicky Krieps is typically compelling as a mother in a Kafkaesque legal custody battle

There are frustrations. Given Clémence's legal training and privilege, her passivity can feel implausible, while the excursions into queer techno nightlife could do with a good snip.

Yet Krieps keeps it compelling. As Clémence's loose-limbed confidence gradually contracts into something shaven-headed and almost saint-like, she is at once warrior, victim and fugitive from feeling. The primal love between mother and son is heartbreakingly vivid. Tender and elliptical, this drama keeps you hooked right up to its unpredictable, provocative ending. **LI-Z**

In cinemas

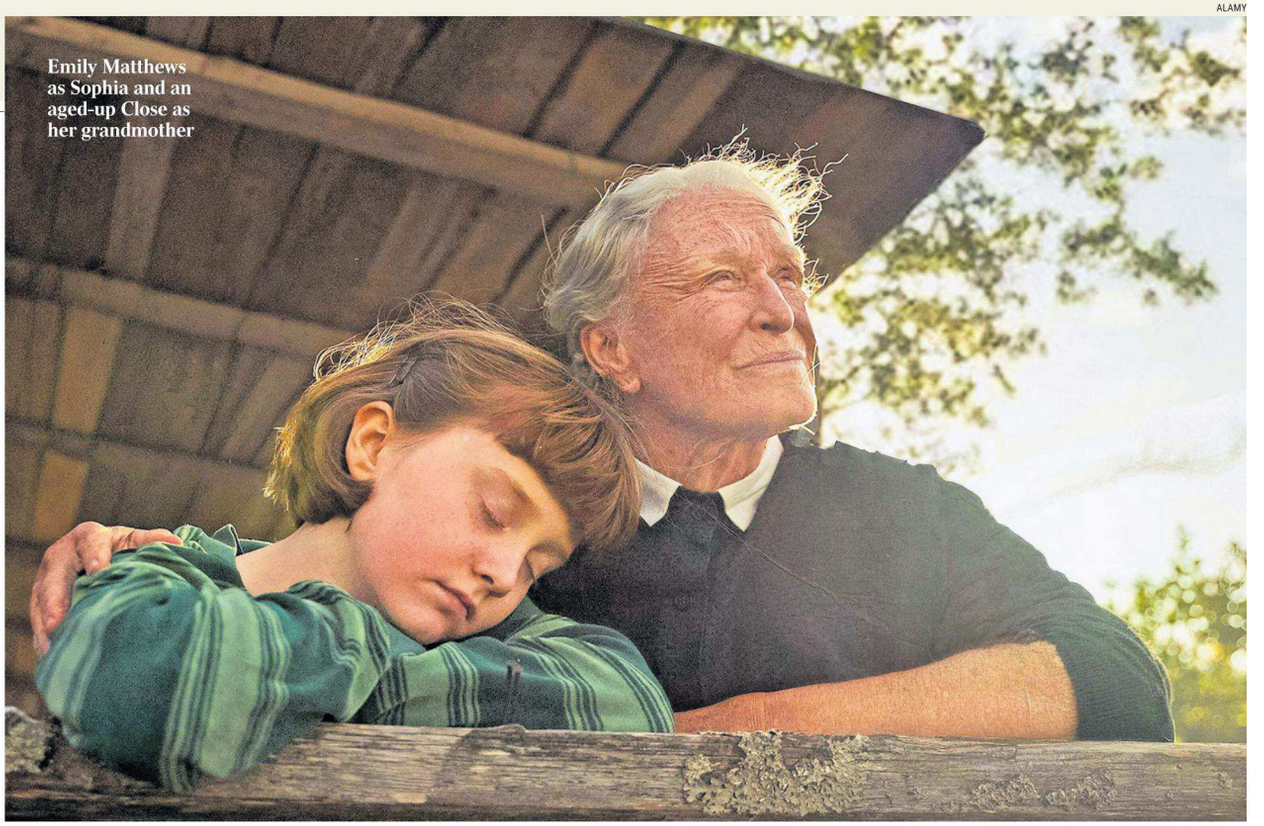
A Child of My Own
15, 96min
★★★☆☆

This slippery, candy-coloured docudrama is based on a notorious true crime. In 2009 Eleonor "Ale" Alejandra Marín Mendoza, a Mexican health administrator who had faked her pregnancy, stole a newborn baby from the hospital where she worked.

Pretending that she was going in to give birth herself, Ale (the Bambi-eyed Ana Celeste, *right*) walked out with the little girl stuffed inside a gift bag. She was arrested hours later at the Hotel Hollywood, alongside her husband, Arturo (Armando Espitia), who had apparently believed that his wife was nine months pregnant.

Such stranger-than-fiction stories are Netflix catnip. But the Chilean

ALAMY



Emily Matthews as Sophia and an aged-up Close as her grandmother

Glenn Close's Nordic getaway

the big film

The actress plays a dying Finnish grandma in a gorgeous take on a book by the Moomins creator, writes Larushka Ivan-Zadeh

By 1972 Tove Jansson's whimsical Moomins comics and children's books were a worldwide sensation. Yet *The Summer Book*, published that year, brought the Finnish writer a whole new adult readership and became an instant modern classic that has never been out of print.

Written a year after her mother's death and inspired by the summers Jansson spent with her family on a tiny island in the Gulf of Finland, it is impossible to categorise: part fiction, part memoir, part adventure, part philosophy. A Scandi equivalent of *The Little Prince*, perhaps, though more firmly rooted in the real world.

Not that much happens in this English-language adaptation directed by Charlie (son of Malcolm) McDowell. Nine-year-old Sophia (Emily Matthews), whose mother has recently died, returns by boat to the family's summer home with her grieving, workaholic illustrator father (Anders Danielsen Lie, the star of Joachim Trier's *Oslo* trilogy — excellent) and her elderly grandma (an aged-up Glenn Close).

Their remote archipelago island is little more than a rock with a shack and a mossy "magic forest". They swim, quarrel, slurp soup and adopt a cat that ignores them. "Dear God, I'm as bored as beef," Sophia says while praying, possibly voicing the frustration of less patient viewers. "Let something happen. Like a storm or anything! Amen."

Still, *The Summer Book* asks something increasingly unusual of its audience: that we slow down to meet it — and pay attention. This is emphatically not a second-screen scrolling watch. Like Jansson's Moomins stories it's unsentimental about childhood, accepting of eccentricity and respectful of nature.

The tiny island is a microcosm containing love, death, art, humour, environmental responsibility and even gentrification. The natural world is not simply picturesque but a living, shifting force: ice melts, reeds bend, seaweed sucks beneath the water and the sea changes mood.

McDowell has necessarily smoothed Jansson's episodic observations into a slightly more movie-friendly narrative arc. However, the main event remains the thorny love between grandmother and granddaughter. "I don't like it when you just lie there," Sophia says, irritably. "When are you going to die?" Her granny's unsentimental reply: "Never you mind. Soon."

Hobbling, cranky, evasive and embarking on the slow, hard business of dying, Close's grandmother is also wonderfully alive. Hair bound in tight white plaits, a roll-up clamped in her cigarette holder, she stomps ferociously around the island, enjoying a wild swim and a wild wee.

It's a gloriously unvain performance from the eight-time Oscar nominee, who proposed her own nude scene for Nordic authenticity and reportedly enjoyed it so much that she "didn't want to put my clothes back on".

Meanwhile, the newcomer Matthews, although older than the book's six-year-old Sophia, has a lovely open face and the necessary imperiousness. Her questions such as "Are there ants in heaven?" are not childish quibbles to be dispatched by a one-second Google search but mysteries to be contemplated aloud with someone who takes them seriously.

Shot in tactile detail — plimsolls, sagging swimsuits, tufted wool jumpers, moss and weathered wood — the film only just avoids resembling a Toast clothing catalogue. McDowell's approach is sensitive and loving, if almost too polite. A more instinctive auteur such as Andrea Arnold might have found something wilder in the rocks and coves. There is also way too much explanatory piano.

Surrender to its flow, though, and you'll be rewarded. Like a dip in a clear, cold lake, this cinematic "cool-cation" left me cleansed, revived and blissfully peaceful.

In cinemas

The Summer Book
PG, 95min
★★★★☆

director Maite Alberdi treats this one with the boundary-blurring approach that earned her Oscar nominations for *The Mole Agent* (2020) and *The Eternal Memory* (2023).

Seeking to understand without excusing, *A Child of My Own* humanises a sordid tabloid tale. Just 17, pregnant and "full of hope" when she married, Ale quickly suffered three miscarriages. Under intense pressure to produce an heir from her husband's family, she encounters an unhappily pregnant woman called Mayra in a waiting room for baby scans and strikes a deal to take her unwanted baby. Except that, according to the real-life Mayra, who appears too briefly and belatedly, no such encounter, or deal, took place.

The heart of the story inhabits Ale's version of events, yet in doing so leaves its other victims largely unseen. Blurring fact and fiction, realism and fantasy, archive footage, exclusive interviews and glossy telenovela-style reconstructions, it opens with auditions for the actress who will play Ale.

But when, released after 13 years in prison, the real Ale confronts the reality of her actions, Alberdi's tricksy formalism yields disappointingly little further insight. In fact, you wonder whether it was entirely necessary. **LI-Z**

In cinemas now; Netflix from Aug 13

Bouchra
15, 82min
★★★☆☆

Talking animals may be a cartoon staple but Morocco's first animated feature doesn't star your average singing bunny or cheeky little mouse.

Bouchra is a 35-year-old lesbian coyote living on the scuzzier side of hipster New York. She smokes, drinks, wears a biker jacket and has explicit sexual with a range of cute creatures (bears and cows preferred). She is also struggling to make a film about her complex relationship with her artist mother, Aicha, back in Casablanca.

Nearly ten years after Bouchra came out as gay, her parents still won't acknowledge her sexuality. Their silence has left her stuck, emotionally and creatively.

The directorial debut of the artists Meriem Bennani and Orian Barki, *Bouchra* is an audacious hybrid of animation, documentary and autofiction whose multi-layered form reflects its protagonist's conflicted identities. That said, placing the naturalistic voices of real people into the mouths of animated animals is hardly a new trick. *Creature Comforts* did it more than three decades ago.

These big-eyed 3D animals inhabit near-photorealistic urban landscapes: blinking red neon, honking traffic, shadowy apartments and rain-slicked streets. It's also, unexpectedly, erotic. Animated bodies slide and nuzzle with startling tactility. Who knew watching a coyote lick a cow's neck could be so sexy? However, the episodic narrative that suited the film-makers' viral 2020 Instagram series *2 Lizards* (a surrealist lizard's-eye view of the Covid era) feels stretched across 82 minutes.

"This is like the therapy that I did not do," Aicha says. Too true. And processing their unresolved personal dramas proves somewhat less absorbing for the audience. **LI-Z**

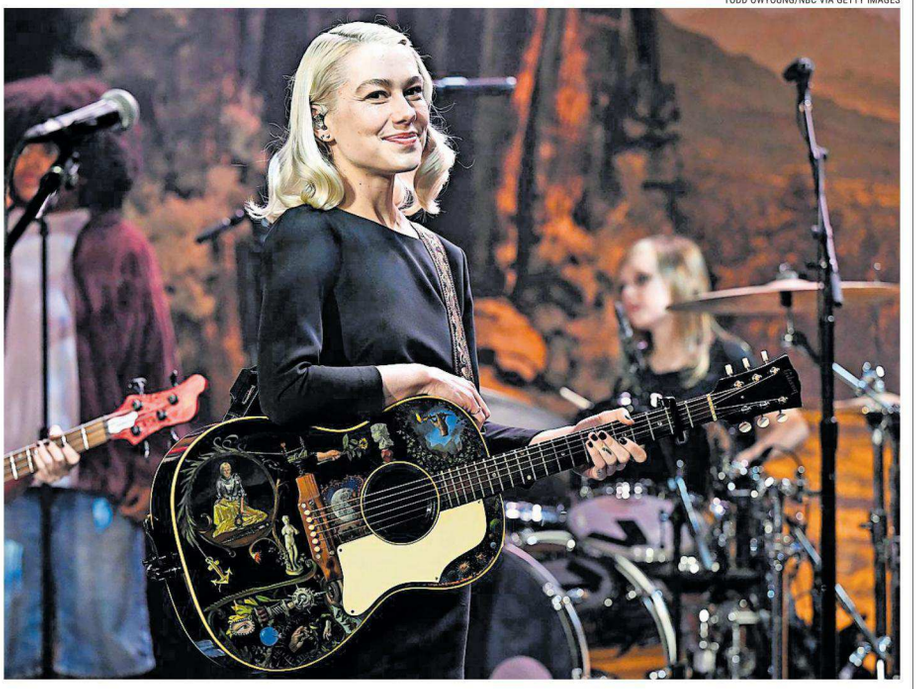
In cinemas

music reviews

This is songwriting from the soul

Phoebe Bridgers's first album in six years is quietly devastating, says Will Hodgkinson

TODD OWYOUNG/NBC VIA GETTY IMAGES



An unassuming singer-songwriter from Pasadena, California, has unwittingly become one of the main influences on modern pop. Taylor Swift, Lorde and — in a particularly brazen fashion — Gracie Abrams have all borrowed from Phoebe Bridgers's soft-voiced, lyrically intimate approach. Listening to Bridgers's first album since 2020's *Punisher* though, you realise how much of the subtleties in the songs remain hers alone. None of the more glittering pop stars taking a leaf out of Bridgers's book has come up with a line of such quiet devastation as "He kissed me hello. He tasted like a flower with chemicals" as Bridgers does on *Kill Me*.

The success of *Punisher* must have put a lot of pressure on Bridgers: a figure from the generally ignored world of alternative rock finding herself thrust into the glare of a wider public. After its release she dealt with the sudden exposure either by finding safety in numbers, forming a supergroup called Boygenius with the similarly minded songwriters Lucy Dacus and Julien Baker, or by lending her services to bigger names with Swift, SZA and Paul McCartney among them. Now we're hearing about the discombobulation such unexpected attention brought on the kind of person who, you suspect, would be happiest chatting about the genius of Elliott Smith to a handful of people in faded T-shirts at some gritty backyard dive.

"I was the belle of the Governor's Ball," she sings over gently picked acoustic guitar and haunted harmonies on *The Governor's Waltz*, citing a massive New York festival where she appeared in 2021 and again in 2025. In case this could be taken as a boast, Bridgers continues, "Hiding in the bathroom like Shelley Duvall" — evoking the image of a crazed Jack Nicholson coming at her with an axe in *The Shining*. Then there is *The Outside*, on which Bridgers, her voice given robotic distance by a vocoder, remembers crowdsurfing at a gig and realising she's no longer a part of the crowd.

With *Lost Weekend*, however, Bridgers hasn't made the standard post-breakout album on the pressures of fame. She has written from the perspective of a normal person who has found herself famous; as such there is no shortage of stories from everyday life. *Bobby* is an indie rock portrait of the first flushes of love and lust, complete with memories of wearing the titular Bobby's shirt while he sings in the shower. Then there is *Still Standing*, an oddly disembodied song about the death of Bridgers's father, which eschews the usual sentiments of grief for indifference, resentment, guilt.

In truth, none of this has much to do with mainstream pop. From the loose, discordant strum of *Never Going Back Again!* (another song about her dad) to the bright melody of the ode to innocence *Lost Boys*, this is music in the lineage of troubled souls from Neil Young to Kurt Cobain. Over an organ hum, *Lost Weekend* details the breakdown of her relationship with the Irish actor Paul Mescal, who is now going out with — irony of ironies — Abrams. "She can pretend to be me," Bridgers accepts of her former boyfriend's new girlfriend on *The Governor's Waltz*. "Since she took my place in my bed, on that stage, I have not lost any sleep."

Pretending is the word: deeply personal songwriting of such craft and artistry as this is impossible to emulate.

pop

Phoebe Bridgers
Lost Weekend
Dead Oceans
★★★★★

Star-crossed lovers shine in a forgotten opera

The industry giants used to feast on complete opera recordings in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet surprises still turn up, even if the opera lasts only 52 minutes: Umberto Giordano's *Marina*, written when he was 20. It was forgotten for well over a century, premiered only recently. It's not a masterpiece but it's still enjoyable listening as the soprano **Eleonora Buratto** and the tenor **Freddie De Tommaso** whisk us through this ebullient and melodious *verismo* melodrama about star-crossed lovers set against war between Montenegro and Serbia.

"I'm finding it hard to breathe," the wounded Serbian hero sings, only to launch into a sorrowful aria where long breaths and sustained high notes are essential. De Tommaso, *below*, delivers everything with a most likeable Italianate flourish, while Buratto, armed with a slightly older voice, fully convinces as a repressed woman seemingly opening up her heart for the first time. Elsewhere, the baritone Mihai Damian barrels through his role as the warrior desperate to claim Buratto for himself, the chorus is lusty, and Vincenzo Milletari and the Orchestra i Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano ensure plenty of instrumental pep. One odd flaw: the almost inaudible gunshot that triggers the expected unhappy ending.

classical

Eleonora Buratto/Freddie De Tommaso
Marina
Decca
★★★★☆

Kenneth Woods
John McCabe
Signum Classics
★★★★☆

It's heartening to find an album celebrating the symphonic output of John McCabe, who died in 2015, one of many British composers now neglected and undervalued. **Kenneth Woods** and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra triumphantly show us what we've been missing: music always stimulating in its colours, textures and flow. Uniquely, his Symphony No 2 was inspired by the formal design of Sam Peckinpah's 1969 film *The Wild Bunch*, explicitly not its gunfire. Symphony No 3, subtitled *Hommages*, spins echoes of some of McCabe's favourite composers into a constantly attractive musical quilt.

We also get his 2007 Cello Concerto, one of the most enjoyable I know and persuasively played by Raphael Wallfisch. Long live John McCabe!

Geoff Brown

Man/Woman/Chainsaw
Cannonball
Fiction
★★★★☆

Their name suggests a death metal band with an unhealthy fixation on Seventies gore movies. But this group actually offer something rather more life-affirming. Fleetwood Mac's soft-rocking approach combines with odd touches — a violin here, a blast of noise there — to produce something original and accessible. *Only Girl* is an uplifting indie rock classic, and *Lighter* is a tender love ballad, but you can only be so serious on a distorted rock dirge called *Goddamn, Lizard Man!*. The six-piece got together when they were 16, set themselves up in a converted vicarage for the next few years and have since developed a reputation as one of the best new live bands out there. Catch them soon.

The Anchoress
As We Once Were
Last Night From Glasgow
★★★★☆

Starting an album with a song called *Du Temps Perdu* could risk it being retitled: *Pretentious, Moi?*. But the Anchoress, aka Wales-born Catherine Anne Davies, moves on to reveal a way with heartfelt pop rock that recalls both Chrissie Hynde's emotional delivery and Karen Carpenter's sad-eyed purity. Recorded in part on Pete Townshend's vast collection of analogue keyboards, Davies's first album since 2021 takes on guilt, motherhood and an abiding love of the Manic Street Preachers, so much so that the Manics' James Dean Bradfield duets on modern power ballad *Throw Over Your Man*. Best of all is *All I Really Want Is Peace*, a sweet epic about the calm after the storm of an argument.

FLO
Therapy at the Club
EMI
★★★☆☆

Harking back to the Nineties R&B girl group golden age of TLC, Destiny's Child and other smooth-voiced singers of glossy glamour, London-based three-piece FLO are flying the flag for real vocal prowess in the age of autotuned pop stars. Layered harmonies abound while the lyrics stick to such well-worn subjects as missing boyfriends, feeling sexy and wondering why someone doesn't fancy you. "You know how to make a pretty girl cry ugly," they complain on the standout *Cry Ugly*, while *Sober* deals with the problem of a boyfriend who can only express his emotions when he's blind drunk. It's all very familiar and rather too slick to really hit home, but well executed.

‘I’m the most famous Haitian ever’

Wyclef Jean tells Will Hodgkinson about his new album — and his attempt to become president of Haiti

MIKE RUIZ/CONTOUR RA BY GETTY IMAGES

Becoming president of a country on the grounds of being massively famous may not seem like an outrageous idea today. Back in 2010, however, Wyclef Jean’s argument that he should become president of Haiti because he was the hugely successful one third of the pioneering New Jersey rap trio Fugees fell on deaf ears.

“I’m the most famous Haitian that ever existed on the planet,” says Jean, who left the country for New York when he was eight, with his pastor father falling foul of Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier’s dictatorship and the Macoute secret police working on Duvalier’s behalf. “So what are you gonna do with that? But they tried to slander my name and I felt some stay-in-your-place type shit, you know what I’m saying? A rapper can say, ‘Yo, drink more alcohol, do more dope,’ and they don’t f*** with you. Once you say you’re gonna run for president, they’ll come at you.”

As Jean points out, his family has political ties. His uncle Raymond Joseph, who from 2005 to 2010 served as the Haitian ambassador to the US, was instrumental in the opposition movement against the Duvalier regime. “They tried to kill him,” he says, casually. “In those days you either worked for the secret police or you fought against it, so I had one uncle fighting against the Macoute and another who was a Macoute. And my parents got out for a better life.”

Politics is about personality as much as policy and Jean, speaking from the back of a car in New York after recording a session with the jazz musician Robert Glasper, is a charismatic figure: equal parts fast-talking hustler and street philosopher. On *Clef Notes (Quantum Leap)*, a dynamic, vivacious old-school hip-hop album rich in Seventies soul and funk samples, he runs through a few highs and lows of his life so far. The album begins with *1990 — Intro: Memory Lane*, which marks the year Fugees, three friends from South Orange, New Jersey, came together. Six years later they released *The Score*, a cinematic masterpiece that has since become one of the bestselling hip-hop albums.

“We never thought we’d get there, you know what I’m saying?” Jean says, oversized sunglasses in place, as he leans deep into the leather of the back seat and runs through his origin story. “Born in Haiti, raised in Brooklyn, meeting Lauryn [Hill, the Fugees singer] in Jersey, and everything on this record actually happened,” he says. “I came from Haiti when I was eight and by 15 I was in the studio. My first producer was [rap pioneer] Kurtis Blow, so now I’m tripping out because I’m thinking, ‘Holy shit, I did this, I did that?’ And I ain’t even started yet.”

Wyclef Jean, centre, with Pras and Lauryn Hill in Fugees in 1997

> “If you can’t control your capital you don’t have a country

The Score was a revelation: a laid-back, socially conscious epic that, after the violence of the gangster-rap era, transformed the genre. “Every era has its geniuses,” Jean says. “I was a Caribbean genius, Miss [Lauryn] Hill was an American genius with a voice like Nina Simone, Pras was just a big hustler, and it was like the best football team getting ready for the World Cup. Put it this way: I don’t know of any other 16-year-old from the projects who was listening to Pink Floyd’s *The Wall* and going, ‘Yo, I’m envisioning my album like that.’”

Jean says that *Ready or Not*, a funky, sultry hit from *The Score* built around a sample of the Philadelphia soul act the Delfonics, was inspired by Roger Waters’s dark night of the soul. “We were in the basement, engineering, I was playing *The Wall* over and over, and the word I kept using was ‘audio-visual’. With *The Score*, we were going to take the listener to the neighbourhood. It was a lightning-in-a-bottle moment.”

Jean’s is an American dream story. “I grew up in a shanty town,” he says of his days in Port-au-Prince. “It was straw-hat houses and if it rained we got wet. But when you’re a kid you make the most of it and the animals were friendly, you know what I’m saying? It was like *The Jungle Book*. But once in a while the trucks would pull up and late at night you would hear a scream. That was someone being taken away by the Macoute and you knew they ain’t coming back.”

Haitian politics have not improved a great deal, with protests in 2018, the assassination of President Moïse in 2021, and the country descending into gang warfare since the collapse of civic infrastructure in 2024. “Port-au-Prince is out of control. Outside of it, normal life is functioning,” Jean says. “But if you can’t control your capital you don’t have a country, and for Haiti to survive, the diaspora have to make a difference. I went back home. I didn’t just sit here on my ass. I tried to be president. Even when they tried to take me out!”

As Fugees were on their way up, Jean was dealing with more commonplace problems. “Life was so simple until I met the heartbreaker,” he raps on *1994 — Boom Bap*. Given that the song references the year Fugees released their debut album, *Blunted on Reality*, and Jean and Hill were in a relationship at the time, it seems reasonable to assume it’s about her. He laughs off the suggestion.

“I’m talking about a girl in high school who said she was going to the prom with me,” he says. “I’m waiting for her, man. I’ve got my suit on, like Napoleon Dynamite, and she didn’t turn up, bro. I get to the prom and she’s with the ball player, man. She took the basketball player over the rapper!”

All this only a few years after Jean had to adapt to life in America. “You go from a hut to bricks,” he says of moving from Port-au-Prince to Brooklyn and then to New Jersey. “You go from riding a donkey to school to taking the bus.” Learning to rap, he says, was a form of survival. “Growing up in the projects, I got into a lot of fights and my mum thought I was going in the wrong direction. One day I saw two guys battle-rapping with a big crew around them, it was all ‘yo mama’ and I thought they would shoot each other, but then someone told me they were battling with words. I thought: I can learn to be a wordsmith.”

Of course, life could have turned out very differently. “I could have slipped on the ICE and faced deportation,” Jean raps on *1991 — Devil’s a Lie*. “I saw so many get deported and I could have been one of them,” he says. “Something happens in the neighbourhood, you get into a knife fight, the judge looks at your passport and you’re out.”

Immigration and Customs Enforcement continues to be in the news under the Trump administration, with two fatal shootings in Maine and Texas by ICE officers in mid-July. Where does Jean stand on US immigration policy? “ICE is not a new thing so I don’t fall for the rhetoric. We can look at the numbers under Obama for that,” he says. “President Trump just amplifies it, he don’t keep it a secret, but I do feel the cases are more extreme now, and you have to take fault when casualties happen. You need law and order but you gotta take responsibility.”

Meanwhile, Jean is keeping busy. Following the autobiographical journey of *Quantum Leap* he’s working on a mammoth seven albums in seven genres: hip-hop, gospel, country, R&B, jazz, reggae and New Orleans mardi gras street party music. This comes after a planned Fugees reunion tour in 2024 collapsed, with Pras serving a 14-year jail sentence after being found guilty of funnelling millions from a Malaysian billionaire into US political influence schemes. So is that it for a Fugees reunion?

“Lauryn is my sister, bro,” Jean insists. “We’re family, we still tour together, we’re coming to the UK. To her kids I’m Uncle Clef. With Pras, I can’t really speak on his case right now but I’m always sending love. You know what I’m saying?

“The struggle is not easy,” he continues. “I’m here to remind people there is a way through the struggle, because that’s what happened when I listened to Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. I heard their songs and thought: ‘Oh shit. I’m gonna be all right.’”

***Clef Notes (Quantum Leap, Vol 1)* is out on SodoMoodLab; Wyclef Jean and Lauryn Hill are at Diaspora Calling!, Milton Keynes Bowl, today**

first night

classical

NYO/Adès

Symphony Hall, Birmingham

★★★★★

The National Youth Orchestra appears at the BBC Proms this weekend — and having just heard them play the same programme at Birmingham's Symphony Hall, I predict it will be devilishly good. These talented teenagers — all 160 of them — kicked off their summer tour with a dance with Mephistopheles, a trip to purgatory and a march to the scaffold.

It is not the first time the composer-conductor Thomas Adès has returned to conduct the orchestra he once played in as a teenage percussionist, but I don't remember him ever looking as if he was enjoying it quite so much. But then it is hard not to smile at the slightly ridiculous yet undoubtedly entertaining *Mephisto Waltz No 1* by Liszt, played with vigour and flair. The gutsy string sound was deliciously good, while all the instrumental solos, from honeyed violin to dazzling harp, were delivered with great panache.

Liszt was a big influence on Adès's *Dante* ballet, particularly the *Inferno* opening. Here we jumped right in at the *Purgatorio* second movement, which blows in with a cool wind conjured by the orchestra. One of the score's distinctive elements is the use of pre-recorded chants from the Ades Synagogue in Jerusalem, which the composer came across thanks to a recording from his brother.

Adès describes the voices as "hosts of souls" and they rise unseen, but loudly, from the back of the hall. Echoing their evocative contours, the orchestra transforms these morning prayers into a kaleidoscope of colours and, at times, a bacchanalian whirl. It is thrilling music that would put the pros through their paces, but the NYO was more than up to the challenge.

Did paradise await after the interval? Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* features opium nightmares and a witch's sabbath, so not exactly — but this tumultuous tale of love proved just the right piece to end the concert. The quality of the NYO's sound and responsiveness to Adès's conducting were wonderful, but above all it was their understanding of the music's emotional life that made this such a compelling performance. Beforehand, I might have argued this warhorse was overplayed. Afterwards, I wanted to hear it all again — and luckily I can.

Rebecca Franks

Royal Albert Hall, London, tomorrow, live on BBC Radio 3; BBC4 on Sun

ANDY PARADISE/BBC

Ladysmith Black Mambazo were the headline stars, with stunning vocals and dazzling showmanship

Songs like long-lost pals

A Prom to celebrate 40 years of Paul Simon's hit album was a mixed bag, says Stephen Dalton

proms

Under African Skies — The Songs of Graceland

Royal Albert Hall

★★★☆☆

Marking the 40th anniversary of Paul Simon's scandalous but hugely successful global-fusion album *Graceland*, this late-night BBC Prom featured a rich gallery of talents, even if the music sometimes felt a little too sedate. The backbone was the Nu Civilisation Orchestra, Proms veterans who have reworked classic albums by Marvin Gaye, Charles Mingus, Nina Simone and David Bowie. But the headline stars of this packed Royal Albert Hall show were the veteran South African male voice choir Ladysmith Black Mambazo, who were catapulted to Grammy-winning fame by *Graceland*. Founded in 1960 by Joseph Shabalala, the choir's present line-up is led by his sons Msizi, Sibongiseni, Thulani and Thamsanqa.

Alongside Ladysmith, the evening's revolving cast of vocalists included the R&B singer Laura Mvula, who lent a belting soul edge, notably on the bouncy Afropop gallop of *Gumboots* and a sparkling *I Know What I Know*. The soft-rock singer-songwriter James Bay and the folk-pop duo Flyte also shared lead vocals across the set. Their contributions, such as *The Boy in the Bubble* and *Crazy Love, Vol II*, were some of the weakest of the night, perhaps because they were sonically closest to Simon's originals but lacked his rhythmic dexterity and pristine, pin-sharp, harmonic precision.

This overwhelmingly positive birthday party carefully played down the controversial political hinterland to *Graceland*, in which Simon was widely vilified for breaking the cultural boycott on apartheid-era South Africa, compounded by arguable allegations of plagiarism, colonialism and cultural appropriation. That storm soon passed, partly thanks to endorsements from the exiled South African musical legends Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela, who toured with Simon in 1987. Even Nelson Mandela eventually gave the album his blessing. Indeed, one of the evening's highlights was Ladysmith's self-penned a cappella tribute to Mandela, *Halala South Africa (Long Walk to Freedom)*.

A few gauche choices weakened the show, notably a superfluous medley of instrumental supper-club jazz. Many of the orchestra's overly polite arrangements lacked the surging, propulsive, bass-heavy swing that made *Graceland* so infectious. But *Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes* and *You Can Call Me Al* proved they've lost little of their charm. Most of all, though, this was a showcase for Ladysmith's stunning vocals. Understated musical genius combined with dazzling showmanship will always be an irresistible combination.

On BBC Sounds

theatre

Fame the Musical

Theatre Royal Plymouth (155min)

★★★★☆

Fame may be fleeting, but *Fame*, the collage-like story of a fictional group of American teenagers pursuing their dreams at New York City's real-life High School of Performing Arts, is not. First it was an Oscar-winning 1980 movie, then a six-season US TV series. By that decade's end it had found its way to the stage.

The European premiere of *Fame the Musical*, as it was billed, occurred at Theatre Royal Plymouth in 1995. Now it has come full circle via a new production by the venue's associate artistic director Tom Jackson Greaves, who choreographs. The result is unflaggingly pacey and enjoyably retro but charged with an immediacy that invites us to invest in the characters. This is in large part thanks to excellent casting. It may not be one of the great musicals, yet it certainly is durable and highly playable.

Covering a four-year period, Jose Fernandez's book follows the ups and downs of a handful of hopefuls enrolled at the Midtown Manhattan school for drama, dance and music.

The themes swirling round the young protagonists — ambition versus low self-esteem, racial prejudice, economic barriers, sexual identity, exploitation and drug abuse — could take on an extra edge by the continuingly precarious state of arts education in the UK. Not that the show ever belabours that contemporary point.

Placed on a revolve, the co-costume designer Soutra Gilmour's three-storey building setting is handsome and flexible. The ensemble dance numbers are lively and fluid. The score, mainly by Jacques Levy and Steve Margoshes, is a very workable mix of upbeat pop and ballads.

The high spots are solo songs that function like theatrical monologues: Joe Boyle's lovely *I Want to Make Magic*, Megan Ellis's delightfully avid *Think of Meryl Streep* and Harrison Wilde's winningly priapic *Can't Keep It Down*. Towering above them all is Shanay Holmes's *These Are My Children*, her voice soaring as she plumbs the song's emotional depths. Then there is Dean Pitchford and Michael Gore's irresistibly catchy title tune — quite rightly delivered twice. So, dig out the legwarmers and get down to Plymouth.

Donald Hutera

To Aug 15

comedy

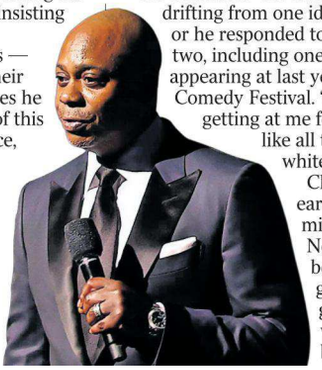
Dave Chappelle

Eventim Apollo, London

★★☆☆☆

Dave Chappelle takes care to avoid anyone recording his stand-up shows, insisting — like many big American comics — that audiences lock away their phones in the secure pouches he provides. On the evidence of this slapdash London appearance, though, he takes less care with the shows themselves.

He did warn us. The 52-year-old began this first of two sold-out nights at the 3,500-seat Eventim Apollo by saying: "I haven't done this for a while." Towards the end he admitted, "I've got to think of a closer and I don't have one. Can I hang out for a minute?" He hung out by drifting from one idea to another, or he responded to a heckle or two, including one about appearing at last year's Riyadh Comedy Festival. "Are you getting at me for doing it like all the other whites?"



Chappelle earns tens of millions for his Netflix specials because he is a genuine comic genius, and when he brought his laconic delivery to bear on a fully formed story the night could go from rambling to thrilling. Talking about a monologue he planned to do on *Saturday Night Live* in 2022 after Will Smith had slapped Chris Rock at the Oscars, he held us rapt with a tale about phoning them to try to get them to come on screen and shake hands.

His skill when his storytelling found its focus only made the digressions that dominated more frustrating. Much of the show was motored by his fame and infamy. Cigarette on the go, he said he wouldn't talk about transgender issues. He then touched on a joke suggesting Caitlyn Jenner's change of gender had been more easily accepted in America than Muhammad Ali's change of name, and explained why he meant it as a joke about racism rather than gender. "I thought I was punching up, they thought I was punching down." Try taking such issues to Africa, he suggested, and you'd see it for the first-world problem it is. "Africans see that shit as an extension of colonialism."

Elsewhere he would start on promisingly big ideas — "western life is not *about* anything any more"; "the illusion of the IMF is dying" — that then fizzled out fast. This was thin stuff for big prices. My seat in row Z of the stalls cost £120. Contentious is one thing, directionless is another.

Dominic Maxwell

Jump scares and big themes in Jamaican-gothic thriller

James Jackson TV review

Possession
Sky Atlantic
★★★☆☆

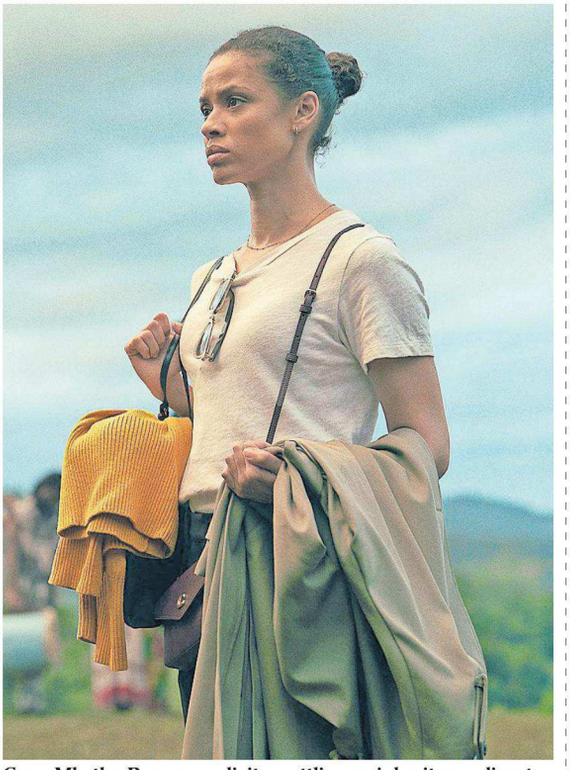
Voodoo may be the byword for religious juju, but it's obeah that deals in the kind of supernatural stuff you're thinking of when it comes to Caribbean black magic spell-casting, high priestesses, occult curses and so on. Back in the day colonialists so feared that its subversive nature would incite slave rebellion it was outlawed (and still is).

It's certainly a going concern in *Possession*, Sky's unusual new slice of Jamaican gothic in five parts, where you really don't want to be bitten by a mosquito — not an obeah-cursed one anyway. You soon find out why.

It begins as a legal drama. Gugu Mbatha-Raw's smart, tough-minded London solicitor Claudia has been sent to the island to dredge up muck on a Jamaican mystery man who, out of nowhere, has been left the £50 million estate of a white aristocrat. A fortune built on slave money.

With a title such as *Possession* — revealed over flames in the title credits — it's not wholly unexpected when things start to take mad, unsettling turns. For a start, how come Claudia is dreaming of the Hope Estate before she has arrived in Jamaica? We first see her taming her hair for her conspicuously white law firm; by the end she's embracing cornrows, having reconnected with her heritage via the macabre-exotica route.

The aristocrat's son Oliver (Jonny Lee Miller), who has just lost his father and now quite possibly his entire inheritance, is like the embodiment of white guilt — so very English as he makes tea and toast for Claudia — a contrast in every way to Cudjoe East, the local guy about to take his dad's estate. The distinct whiff of the supernatural hovers in the air, as well as in the ominous trunk in the house's bedroom. But here, too, are flashbacks to the 1700s when the tyrannical, bewigged white owner of the Hope Hill plantation cuts out the tongue of his slave. Watching on is his appalled daughter, played by wide-eyed Bel Powley, who'll soon become pretty appalling herself.



Gugu Mbatha-Raw as a solicitor settling an inheritance dispute

I'm not wholly sure the drama needed this flashback plotline, but the writer Karla Crome wants to make overt the theme of how the colonial past shapes the present. Without wishing to give too much away, East has a more direct link to the past than Claudia could have imagined.

There's a pleasingly evoked local feel to her snooping about (former sugar plantations, street carnivals) and a feverish vibe creeping around at night (ecstatic rituals, more nightmares). It's almost like a contemporary take on *I Walked with a Zombie*, and reminded me in places of the underrated 1989 film *The Serpent and the Rainbow*.

Certainly the debut screenwriter Crome isn't short of fresh ideas, the script ambitiously tying together big themes of race, identity and colonial legacy which eventually somewhat lose their way as the title becomes literal and characters stagger about with possessed minds.

In fairness, you could probably safely say this is the only thriller you'll see this year that attempts to combine jump scares — and yes, there are a few of those — with a thought-provoking comment on reparations. Because obeah may be creating havoc, but it's not really the enemy here, rather it's a cultural force of justice echoing down the centuries.

Nick Grimshaw
6 Music, 7am

As part of the BBC's *The Music Is Black* season, in collaboration with V&A East's exhibition of the same name, every Friday in August the station will celebrate British black music over the past 40 years. Today's shows look back at the 1980s, beginning with Grimshaw talking to the lovers rock pioneers Janet Kay, *above*, and Caroll Thompson, followed by Lauren Laverne (10am) with DJ Norman Jay taking a dive into rare groove. At 2pm, Craig Charles (1-4pm) speaks to Neville Staple of the Specials, and Emily Pilbeam, sitting in for Huw Stephens (4pm), opens the doors into acid house. *Clair Woodward*

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Rosie Wright and Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Ayesha Hazarika **4.00** Carolyn Quinn with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Dom Joly **10.00** Henry Bonsu. The day's key events **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Michelle Visage **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits **9.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco **11.00** The Rock Show with Rick Astley **12.00** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop (r) **1.00am** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul **2.00** Pick of the Pops (r) **4.00** Radio 2 in Concert: Deacon Blue (r)

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
Highlights from the BBC Proms, performances from the Ryedale Festival and Baroque music from Fribourg. Mendelssohn (Violin Concerto in E minor); Schubert (Piano Sonata in C minor, D.958); Dvorák (Symphony No. 7 in D minor); Schubert (*Death and the Maiden Quartet*); and Zimmermann (*Märchen-Suite — Fairy-Tale Suite*)
4.00 Composer of the Week: Mozart (1756-1791)
Kate Molleson explores how the brotherhood of Freemasons influenced Mozart's later years
5.00 In Tune
7.00 Live BBC Proms
Petroc Trelawny presents a concert by BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, with conductor Nil Venditti and star soloists at the Royal Albert Hall. Respighi (*Church Windows*); and Rossini (*Stabat mater*). During the interval, opera director Julia Burbach discusses with Petroc the operatic elements of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, as well as the importance of stage craft in the works of Rossini and other Italian operatic composers
10.00 Late Junction
Dan Gilmore revisits forgotten hard-drive recordings on Know I've Been Here Before, and a preview of Poland's Sanatorium of Sound Festival. Verity Sharp presents
11.30 'Round Midnight
Hosted by Alice Zawadzki
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 The Briefing Room (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Desert Island Discs (r)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 The Food Programme
11.45 Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (5/5) (r)
12.04pm AntiSocial
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Bare Necessities (5/5)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Central Intelligence
By Greg Haddrick. In 1966, as Soviet nuclear fears grow, the CIA turns to satellites and surveillance to spy on the KGB. Stars Kim Cattrall and Johnny Flynn (5/10)
2.45 Living on the Edge (6/10) (r)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time
3.45 Short Works
Parys, Anglesey by Fflur Dafydd
4.00 Last Word
4.30 Sideways (4/8) (r)
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Current-ish
Lucy Porter and guests discuss the stories everyone is talking about. Last in the series
7.00 The Archers
Keira makes a surprising discovery
7.15 Screenshot
Exploring changing ideas about masculinity on screen (6/6)
8.00 Any Questions?
Alex Forsyth chairs the political forum programme from Open University, Milton Keynes
8.55 This Week in History (r)
9.00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics
Christopher Biggins and Llewelyn Morgan learn about the boy emperor of Rome, Nero (2/7) (r)
9.30 Breakin' the Cycle
Colin and D begin production, but remain tempted by their lucrative drug business (2/6) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield
By Oliver Goldsmith (5/10)
11.00 Americast
11.30 The Ocean within Us (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (5/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am The Confessional **8.30** Following Pappano **8.45** Small Island **9.00** Olga Koch: OK Computer **9.30** Behind the Taverna **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Soul Music **10.30** The Forum **11.00** The Waiting Game **11.30** Who Killed Aldrich Kemp? **12.00** Little Blighty on the Down **12.30pm** Beyond Our Ken **1.00** The Confessional **1.30** Following Pappano **1.45** Small Island **2.00** The Museum of Curiosity **2.30** Millport **3.00** Berlin **4.00** Soul Music **4.30** The Forum **5.00** The Waiting Game **5.30** Who Killed Aldrich Kemp? **6.00** Little Blighty on the Down **6.30** Beyond Our Ken **7.00** The Confessional **7.30** Following Pappano **7.45** Small Island **8.00** The Museum of Curiosity **8.30** Millport **9.00** Berlin **10.00** Olga Koch: OK Computer **10.30** Njambi McGrath: Becoming Njambi **10.45** Rhys James Is Wise **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.00** Vent **11.30** Laura Solon: Talking and Not Talking

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Chiles on Friday **1.00pm** Elis James and John Robins **2.00** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **8.00** Football: Middlesbrough v Wrexham (Kick-off **8.00**). The EFL Cup first-round tie **10.00** Johnny l'Anson **1.00am** Edward Adoo

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** talkSPORT Breakfast with Alan Brazil **10.00** Sam Matterface & Alex Crook **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** Kick Off **8.00** Kick Off: Middlesbrough v Wrexham **10.00** The Sports Bar Weekender **1.00am** Extra Time with Ben Fletcher

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Ian Collins **10.00** Alex Phillips **1.00pm** Mark Dolan **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **9.00** What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan **10.00** Andre Walker ft. Ash **1.00am** Ben Fletcher

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am The Remix with Chris Hawkins **5.30** Chris Hawkins **7.00** Choice Nick Grimshaw. Music, chat and features to start off the day **10.00** Lauren Laverne **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Emily Pilbeam **7.00** The People's Party with Femi Koleoso **9.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **10.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **11.00** The 6 Mix with Mary Anne Hobbs **12.00** 6 Music's Rave Forever **1.00am** 6 Music's Forever Dark **2.00** Focus Beats **4.00** Ambient Focus

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am Steve Denyer on The Chris Evans Breakfast Show with Moneybox **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Phil Taggart **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Jen Thomas

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Dan Walker **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **6.00** Classic FM at the Movies with Jonathan Ross **8.00** Classical Spotlight with Alexander Armstrong **10.00** Calm Classics **2.00am** Katie Breathwick

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Tony Bennett night
BBC4, from 9.45pm

Frank Sinatra once called Tony Bennett "the best singer in the business", but he was never quite part of the Rat Pack, instead a New York jazz stylist closer to Duke Ellington and Count Basie. He outlasted them all, possessed of a sensitivity and a staying power with which he carried the Great American Songbook into the 21st century via his celebrated duets with Amy Winehouse and Lady Gaga. Tonight BBC4 celebrates the centenary of his birth, most of it hailing from his 1979 *Tony Bennett Sings* heyday featuring songs from the movies, Broadway, Tin Pan Alley and his own hits (the selection runs from 10.45pm). These are bookended by his *London Palladium: BBC Sessions* from 2011 (at 9.45pm) and a 1996 documentary about his native New York (at 1.55am), the city where, whatever claim San Francisco might make, he left his heart. **Helen Stewart**

Tony Bennett (BBC4, from 9.45pm)

Our Lives: The NaNaz — Age Against The Machine
BBC1, 7.30pm

Sally Wainwright's BBC drama *Riot Women* wasn't pure fiction: this *Our Lives* documentary follows the NaNaz, a six-piece Welsh punk band who met at a music workshop for women over 50. For some it was a return to a lifelong passion; for others, it was the first time they had even picked up an instrument. When the course ended, the chemistry between the women was undeniable and the NaNaz were born. They have built a loyal fanbase and released an EP (*NaNafesto*). This cheering film follows them as they prepare to play their fast-and-very-furious songs about injustice and menopausal rage at a New York festival. Having no manager, they must balance their complicated, busy lives with the desire to rock. **Victoria Segal**

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Animal Park (r) (AD)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt: 20 Years of The One Show. Two teams made of *The One Show* presenters battle it out in Builth Wells (AD)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 The Hairdresser Mysteries. Lily finds herself with both a hairstyle emergency and a murder to solve in the village (AD)
2.45 Escape to the Country. A couple seek a home with business potential in Cornwall (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room. The dealers see some unusual characters including Uncle Bert the skeleton and a wooden rabbit
4.30 The Answer Run. Jason Manford hosts
5.15 Pointless. Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 The One Show Alex Jones and Roman Kemp kick off the show's 20th birthday celebrations

7.30 Our Lives Following Welsh punk band the NaNaz, six women who are tearing up the rulebook on growing older. *See picks of the day* (AD)

8.00 Granite Harbour As the case reaches a conclusion, Lindo and Bart face a race against time to find the real killer as long-held secrets are finally revealed. Last in the series (AD)

9.00 Would I Lie to You? Cush Jumbo, Judi Love, Grayson Perry and Tim Vine join the regulars (4/9) (r)

9.30 Ann Droid Sue has invited Michael and Renee to a nice family dinner but is upset when their real motive for coming round is revealed (4/6) (AD)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather

10.45 FILM: 28 Days Later (18, 2002) A man wakes from a coma to discover Britain has been struck by a terrifying experimental virus that sends victims into a homicidal rage. With a handful of other survivors, he heads for Manchester, the last outpost unaffected by the outbreak — but realises the virus is not the only threat. Horror starring Cillian Murphy and Naomie Harris (AD)

12.35am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2

6.30am Money for Nothing (r)
7.15 The Bidding Room (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Marcus Wareing Simply Provence. A compilation edition (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00pm Richard Osman's House of Games. Sean Fletcher, Louise Minchin, Chris Washington and Kimberly Wyatt take part (r)
1.30 The Finish Line. Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation. The duo's baking odyssey ends in Spain (r) (AD)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown. Cattle farmers compete for top prizes at the Westmorland County Show in Cumbria (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. A visit to Clitheroe in Lancashire from 2003 (r)
5.15 Flog It! At Haddon Hall, Derbyshire (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. Gethin Jones, Tiff Stevenson, Kate Thornton and Gary Wilmot take part on the quiz (r)
6.30 Just One Thing. A look at the benefits of eating beetroot. Last in the series (r) (AD)

7.00 Iolo's Anglesey Iolo Williams explores the flora and fauna of Anglesey, and also travels to a stunning red squirrel wood (2/4) (r)

7.30 Beechgrove Garden Calum Clunie begins sowing winter crops in his family plot, while Brian Cunningham harvests his spring vegetables

8.00 Gardeners' World Frances Tophill returns to Damson Farm in Bath and spends the day with owner Alison and guest Mary Berry, while Arit Anderson visits an urban garden in London. *See picks of the day*

9.00 Bergerac Chloe finds evidence that John Blakely's accusations may be true, and a development leads the team to suspect one of Jersey's most notorious criminals (4/6) (AD)

9.45 QI XL Sandi Toksvig hosts an extended edition with Ria Lina, Eshaan Akbar, Jimmy Carr and Alan Davies answering questions on the theme of tricks and treats (r)

10.30 Newsnight With Paddy O'Connell

11.05 FILM: Hoard (18, 2023) Years after moving away from her hoarding mother, a foster teen revisits her childhood memories and the trauma she repressed. Drama starring Saura Lightfoot-Leon, Joseph Quinn, Hayley Squires and Lily-Beau Leach

1.00am Sign Zone: Britain's Strictest Schools — Panorama In-depth current affairs report covering a story behind the headlines (r) (SL) **1.30-2.30** The Rapture. Gabs and Dick uncover evidence that Leonard is hiding something, while floods in India match Bethany's drawings (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning
1.30pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. David Dickinson and the team visit Newport. Karen Dalmeny pays big bucks for a brooch, and Laurie Scully conducts a male voice choir (r) (AD)
3.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts as another contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r) (AD)
4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents the quiz show as four more contestants answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to take on one of the ruthless Chasers and attempt to win a cash prize (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 Live EFL Cup: Middlesbrough v Wrexham (Kick-off **8.00**). Mark Pougatch presents all the action from the first-round tie at Riverside Stadium. Boro will be looking to avoid a repeat of this stage last season, when they were beaten 4-0 here by Doncaster Rovers. Wrexham fared better in the competition, going on to reach the fourth round before they were eliminated by Welsh rivals Cardiff City following a 2-1 defeat. With analysis from Tommy Smith and Steven Fletcher, and commentary by Seb Hutchinson and Lucy Ward. *See picks of the day*

10.25 ITV News at Ten; Weather; followed by Regional News

11.15 FILM: Jack Reacher: Never Go Back (12, 2016) The vigilante tries to save an army major who has been framed for murder by a sinister conspiracy. Action thriller sequel starring Tom Cruise and Cobie Smulders

1.10am Shop on TV 3.00 Force of Nature. Shifting rains test three mothers as floods transform habitats, destroy homes, and bring perilous opportunity (r) (AD, SL) **3.50** Long Lost Family. Cases featured include a woman who wants to find her older brother (r) (AD, SL) **4.45-6.00** Unwind with ITV

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Help for a restaurant in New Orleans (r)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. Items uncovered in Norfolk include a tractor (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. A house in Leeds is bought, renovated and sold (r)
2.10 Countdown. TV presenter Ade Adepitan is this edition's Dictionary Corner guest
3.00 A Place in the Sun. House-hunters from Manchester seek a home in Cadiz (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith. At Treberfydd House, the biggest wedding of the year is underway (r) (AD)
5.00 Château DIY. The owners of the Château de Lalacelle begin an attempt to bring their garden back to life (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz find a rare *Superman* comic, and the very first *Spider-Man* comic (r) (AD)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Surgery Secrets of the Super Rich A bride-to-be has a non-surgical liquid nose job, a mother-of-two tackles years of sun damage with laser technology, and a property investor is looking into a long-term programme of tweakments (4/6) (AD)

9.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy words-and-numbers quiz, as team captains Rob Beckett and Jon Richardson are joined by Katherine Ryan and Fatiha El-Ghorri. With special guests Jake Lambert and the Brett Domino Trio

10.00 Big Fat Quiz: Best Bits Victory is snatched from the jaws of humiliation, as comedians including Sara Pascoe, James Acaster and Jamie and Natasia Demetriou taste sweet success against all odds

11.05 Sarah Millican: Home Bird Live Stand-up show at Newcastle's Tyne Theatre & Opera House, in which the comedian shares insights into life, including the need to put down some roots now she has cats (r)

12.10am Greg Davies: The Back of My Mum's Head Stand-up comedy with the *Man Down* star, from the Lowry in Salford (r) (AD) **1.05** Ramy (AD) **2.15 FILM: Theater Camp (12, 2023)** Comedy starring Ben Platt, Molly Gordon and Noah Galvin **3.50** Sunday Brunch (r) **4.00-6.10** Four in a Bed (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: The Book Club Murders (PG, TVM, 2024) When members of a book club start dying after receiving threatening letters that reveal their darkest secrets, the organiser searches for the culprit to protect her daughter from becoming the next victim. Mystery starring Brittany Underwood
4.00 Castle. Part two of two. The NYPD and Castle search for Beckett as they try to stop serial killer duo Nieman and Tyson from claiming the detective as their next victim (r)
4.55 Love Nature. How the humble fox should be celebrated not vilified (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Menorca: A Year in the Sun. Part two of two. An edition taking a look at Menorca's food, art and architectural restorations (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 Tom Read Wilson's Grand Tour The presenter reimagines the rite of passage once undertaken by aristocrats on their Grand Tours of Europe, beginning in Paris (1/3) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Corsica: Jewel of the Mediterranean Cameras focus on the French island, which boasts 600 miles of stunning coastline, lush green forests and majestic mountains. Highlights include a trip to the port town of Bastia on the north-east coast

9.00 Alexander Armstrong in South Korea The presenter journeys across South Korea, one of the most influential and successful countries on earth, known for its manufacturing strength and cultural exports. He arrives late at night in bustling downtown Seoul, and kicks off his epic adventure in Gangnam, the district immortalised by Psy's *Gangnam Style* video (r)

10.30 Piers Morgan: Uncensored Opinion-led news and debate show hosted by Piers Morgan. Piers blends journalism and cultural commentary that is unapologetically direct

12.00 Fare Dodgers: At War with the Law (r) **1.00am** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit (r) **2.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **2.50** Castle (r) **3.40** Friends (r) **4.30** Jane McDonald's Yorkshire: No Place Like Home (r) (SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Milo (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** Adventures of Paddington (r) (SL)

television

Live EFL Cup
ITV1, 7.30pm

With the World Cup now behind us, humdrum football (and not just pre-season friendlies) returns with an early fixture in the competition won in March by Manchester City. It features two Championship clubs who will be vying for promotion in 2026-27 after narrowly missing out last year. Wrexham, owned by the film stars Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney, were just below the play-off places, while Middlesbrough lost the Championship play-off final. **John Dugdale**

Gardeners' World
BBC2, 8pm

Mary Berry is tonight's special guest, spending the day at Damson Farm near Bath with Frances Tophill. The beloved TV cook proves her expertise stretches beyond the kitchen as she offers practical gardening advice, reminisces about her youth in Bath and helps to celebrate a harvest of homegrown fruit and vegetables. Elsewhere, there are visits to an urban edible garden in London, a Punjabi allotment community and a city wildlife sanctuary. **VS**

STREAMING CHOICE

Alley Cats
Netflix

Ricky Gervais has complimented Netflix on their willingness to commission his latest project based on a scant pitch: "It's cats, and they swear." The scabrous gang of Hanna-Barbera-style cartoon cats is played by his preferred ensemble. Indeed one rather suspects the whole show is a ruse to assemble his favourite people and enjoy riffing filthily off a skeleton script, and the tone is late 1990s post-pub. Joining Gervais, as the voice of Gus, are Kerry Godliman (Lara), Diane Morgan (Olive), Tom Basden (Ponce), David Earl (Puke) and Andrew Brooke (Fang). **Helen Stewart**

FILM CHOICE

Heretic (15, 2024)
Sky Cinema Premiere/Now, 8pm

A superb Hugh Grant turns villainous as Mr Reed, a man welcoming two young missionaries into his cavernous house to discuss their religious doctrines. Out of nowhere, he tells them, "The walls and ceiling have metal in them. I hope that's OK." Then things get much, much worse. (1hr 51min) **Ed Potton**

BBC4

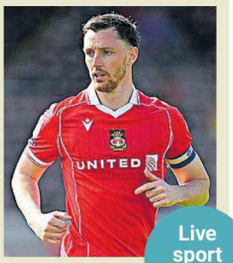
7.00pm Also Sprach Zarathustra at the Proms. Featuring a trio of pieces inspired by the wonders of the sky **8.05** Ravel's Bolero at the Proms **8.20** TOTP: 2000. With music by *NSYNC, All Saints, Kelis and more **8.45** TOTP: 1984. Acts include Frankie Goes to Hollywood **9.15** TOTP: 1988. Including songs by Kim Wilde and Fairground Attraction **9.45** Tony Bennett at the London Palladium: BBC Sessions. A concert from 2011. *See picks of the day* **10.45** Tony Bennett Sings. Series featuring performances by the crooner from 1979, beginning with a selection of songs from movies **11.15** Tony Bennett Sings. Some of the singer's own favourite songs **11.50** Tony Bennett Sings **12.20am** Tony Bennett Sings. Three editions **1.55** Tony Bennett's New York **3.20am-3.45** TOTP: 2000

Sky Arts

6.00am Cirque du Soleil: Varekai **8.00** The Joy of Painting (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Dean Martin (AD) **12.00** Agatha Christie's Pale Horse **2.00pm** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour (b/w) **3.00** The Eighties (AD) **4.00** Discovering: Peter Sellers (AD) **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2022 (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** Bob Dylan: The Other Side of the Mirror. The singer-songwriter's appearances at the Newport Folk Festival from 1963 to 1965 (AD) **9.35** I Was a Teenage Sex Pistol **11.20** Classic Albums **12.20am** The Jam: Live at Rockpalast **1.50** Pretenders Live and Loose in LA **3.45** Sky Arts Book Club **4.45am-6.00** Michael Caine: Becoming of a Hollywood Star (AD)

More4

8.55am Heir Hunters **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** Car SOS. Vehicle restorations (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud revisits a couple constructing an art deco lighthouse tower on a clifftop in north Devon (8/11) (AD) **9.00** Carpe Diem. New series. French legal drama starring Samuel Le Bihan as a man who was falsely imprisoned, and now works as a lawyer defending others who have been wrongfully accused (1/6) (AD) **10.05** 24 Hours in A&E. A seven-year-old boy is brought in after falling from a tree (7/8) (AD) **11.10** 24 Hours in A&E. A retired builder is treated after falling from his daughter's roof (8/8) (AD) **12.15am** 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25am-3.55** A Place in the Sun



Live sport today

Wrexham captain Dominic Hyam

Live Ladies European Tour Golf
Sky Sports Golf, 2pm-6
Coverage of day two of the London Championship team competition staged at Centurion Club in St Albans

Live Tennis
Sky Sports Tennis, 4pm-4am
Coverage from day six of the ATP Canadian Open event in Montreal and the WTA staging of the tournament in Toronto

The Hundred: Birmingham Phoenix Men v Sunrisers Leeds Men
Sky Sports Cricket, 6pm-9.30 (Start-time **6.30**). Coverage of the match from Edgbaston

Live EFL Cup: Middlesbrough v Wrexham
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Football, 7pm-10.45 (Kick-off **8.00**). The first-round tie staged at Riverside Stadium

Live Super League: Wakefield Trinity v Leeds Rhinos
Sky Sports +, Sky Sports Action, 7.30pm-10.15 (Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the match at DIY Kitchens Stadium

Talking Pictures

6.00am What's on TPTV with Noel **6.10 FILM: Command Performance (U, 1937)** (b/w) **7.55 FILM: Serious Charge (PG, 1959)** (b/w) **9.55 FILM: Sherlock Holmes: Terror By Night (PG, 1946)** (b/w) **11.10** The Lucy Show **11.45 FILM: The Steel Key (PG, 1953)** (b/w) **1.05pm** The Edgar Wallace Mystery Theatre (b/w) **2.15** The Adventures of Robin Hood (b/w) **2.45 FILM: My Brother's Keeper (PG, 1948)** (b/w) **4.30** The Cheaters (b/w) **5.00** A Family at War **6.00** Rumpole of the Bailey **7.00** Z Cars (b/w) **8.00** Public Eye **9.10** Supernatural (6/8) **10.15** Tales of Tomorrow (b/w) **12.05am FILM: The Thirty-Nine Steps (PG, 1978)** Thriller with Robert Powell **2.10 FILM: The Appointment (15, 1981) 4.00** The Vise (b/w) **5.00am-6.00** Railway Murders

Film4

11.00am Oliver! (U, 1968) Musical starring Ron Moody (AD) **1.55pm Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon (PG, 1942)** Mystery thriller starring Basil Rathbone (b/w) **3.15 Buchanan Rides Alone (U, 1958)** Western with Randolph Scott **4.50 The True Story of Jesse James (PG, 1957)** Biopic starring Robert Wagner **6.40 Ad Astra (12, 2019)** Sci-fi drama starring Brad Pitt (AD) **9.00 The Martian (12, 2015)** An astronaut left stranded on Mars has to find a way to survive for years on meagre resources. Ridley Scott's sci-fi drama starring Matt Damon and Jessica Chastain (AD) **11.50 Last Night in Soho (18, 2021)** Mystery horror starring Thomasin McKenzie and Anya Taylor-Joy (AD) **2.05am-4.00 Sick of Myself (15, 2023)** Norwegian drama starring Kristine Kujath Thorp

BBC3

7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** I Am Darren (r) (AD) **7.20 FILM: Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian (PG, 2009)** Nightwatchman Larry and his living museum-exhibit friends must stop a reanimated pharaoh from taking over the world. Fantasy comedy starring Ben Stiller, Amy Adams and Owen Wilson (AD) **9.00** Death in Paradise. A distillery owner is poisoned during a group tasting of his rum (4/8) (r) (AD) **10.00** Ghosts Australia. Kate's mother invites herself to move in (r) **10.20** Ghosts Australia. Kate and Sean's date night is interrupted (r) **10.45** The Golden Cobra. All eight episodes of the animated comedy set in an Ebbw Vale takeaway (AD) **12.40am** Ideal. Comedy series **3.35am-3.50** Calamity James (r)

ITV2

6.00am Backyard Builds (SL) **6.30** Dress to Impress (AD, SL) **7.30** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **8.20** The Real Housewives of Orange County **9.20** The Only Way Is Essex **10.20** Dawson's Creek **11.20** Charmed **12.15pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.15** Supermarket Sweep **2.15** The Floor USA (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City. The reunion continues **5.00** The Real Housewives of Orange County **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** The Floor USA (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club (AD) **9.00 FILM: John Wick (15, 2014)** Action starring Keanu Reeves (AD) **11.05** Family Guy. Double bill (AD) **12.05am** American Dad! (AD) **1.05** Bob's Burgers **1.55am-2.20** Deal or No Deal: Banker's Best Battles

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.10** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.35pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Rural drama series (AD) **8.00** Doc Martin. Penhale decides to have a police open day (6/8) (AD) **9.00** Doc Martin. The day of annual Portwenn versus Port Carran gig race arrives once again (7/8) (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. An unexpected twist lies in store at a charity boxing match at Vic's gym (5/6) (AD) **11.00** Grantchester (6/6) (AD) **11.50** Trial & Retribution (7/10) **12.55am** Agatha Christie's Poirot. Mystery drama series (AD) **2.00am-2.30** George and Mildred

ITV4

6.00am Magnum, PI (AD) **8.05** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **9.10** Boon **10.15** The Professionals (AD) **11.20** Robin of Sherwood **12.25pm** Magnum, PI (AD) **2.35** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **3.45** Boon **4.50** The Professionals (AD) **5.50** Minder. Arthur and Terry are hired by two farmers to transport a bull (AD) **6.55** Sharpe. The rugged officer sets out to rescue British deserters captured by Spanish rebel El Casco **9.00 FILM: RoboCop (18, 1987)** A murdered police officer is rebuilt as a cyborg, but memories of his human life lead him to turn on his corrupt creators. Sci-fi thriller with Peter Weller and Nancy Allen **11.10** All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite. Hard-hitting, high-flying action **1.30am** Minder (AD, SL) **2.30am-3.00** Two and a Half Men

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.20** The Bill **8.15** Doctors **9.25** Classic Holby City **10.45** Casualty (AD) **11.45** The Bill **12.50pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Neighbours **3.00** Whitstable Pearl (AD) **4.05** Lovejoy **5.20** As Time Goes By. Comedy series **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** Father Brown. An ex-health spa employee is found murdered (AD) **9.00** Father Brown. Lady Felicia's lavish New Year ball is ruined when a VIP guest is murdered (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. A murder at Smithfield Market leads to a shocking revelation (8/8) (AD) **11.20** Luther. The DCI suspects he has been double-crossed (5/6) (AD) **12.40am** Lovejoy. A bereaved couple hire Lovejoy **1.50** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.50am-4.00** Hotel Portofino (SL)

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
12.30am Alan Carr's Picture Slam. With contestants from Lancashire, Birmingham and Cardiff (r) 1.15am-6.00 BBC News

ITV1 Wales
7.00pm-7.30 Coast & Country. Including reports on the children learning all about food at Aberglasney, and the conservation dogs that are saving lives in Africa

STV
7.00pm-7.30 The STV Radio Football Takeover. Hosted by Ewen Cameron, Ronnie Charters and Callum Bell 1.10am-3.00 Shop on TV 4.45am-6.00 Unwind with STV

UTV
7.00pm-7.30 UTV Life. Join Pamela Ballantine for the best of local chat

BBC Scotland
7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven 7.25 Live Sportscene: Partick Thistle v Livingston (Kick-off **7.30**). The Scottish Championship match at Firhill 9.30 Best of Only an Excuse? Sketch show (r) 10.00 Still Game (r) 10.30 Two Doors Down (r) 11.00pm-12.00 Rip It Up (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 9.30 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. The morning's events 12.00 News 12.05pm Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. Soloists over 25 compete for a place to try for the David Ellis Memorial Award 2.00 News 2.05 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. The afternoon's events 7.30 News; Weather 7.50 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. Coverage of the Recitation Choirs and Cerdd Dant 10.30 Y Babell Lên 2026 11.00pm-12.05am Gwesty Aduniad (r)

PBS America

8.00am Weathered: Earth's Extremes **8.35** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall **9.35** The Real Truth **10.40** The Rosenbergs: Atomic Spies **11.50** Hunting the KGB Killers **1.00pm** Weathered: Earth's Extremes **1.35** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall **2.45** The Real Truth **3.45** The Rosenbergs: Atomic Spies **4.55** Hunting the KGB Killers **6.05** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall. How other European rulers propagated an anti-Spanish narrative. Last in the series **7.05** The Real Truth. Factual series uncovering the truth behind science, beginning with sugar (1/6) **8.15** The Rosenbergs: Atomic Spies **9.30** Hunting the KGB Killers **10.40** The Real Truth (1/6) **12.00** The Rosenbergs: Atomic Spies. Documentary **1.15am-2.00** Weathered: Earth's Extremes

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets (r) (AD) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.20** Heated Rivalry (r) (AD) **12.30pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.30** Billions (r) (AD) **4.40** The Last of Us (r) (AD) **7.00** The Penguin. With his nascent operation at stake, Oz attempts to turn the tables (5/8) (r) (AD) **8.00** The Penguin. Oz keeps expanding his reach with more suppliers than ever (6/8) (r) (AD) **9.00** Station Eleven. Elizabeth, Tyler and Clark confront an even more uncertain future (5/10) **10.00** Station Eleven. Kirsten leaves the Traveling Symphony behind to track down the Prophet (6/10) **11.00** The Last of Us. Joel and Ellie near their journey's end (9/9) (r) (AD) **12.00** True Detective: Night Country (r) (AD) **1.30am** Billions (r) (AD) **5.00am-6.00** Urban Secrets (r)

Sky Docs

6.00am The 2000s (r) **7.00** Discovering: Mel Gibson (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **9.00** 100 Foot Wave (r) (AD) **10.00** The Comedy Store (r) (AD) **11.05** Urban Secrets (r) **12.00 FILM: Lancaster (PG, 2022)** (AD) **2.00pm FILM: Everton: Howard's Way (12, 2019)** (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Mel Gibson. The life and career of the actor (r) (AD) **6.00** David Frost Vs (r) (AD) **7.00** The Alien Autopsy Scandal. Claims of a hoax grow (r) (AD) **8.00** The Salisbury Poisonings: A Spy Next Door. The nerve agent attack on Sergei Skripal (r) **9.40 FILM: Bowling for Columbine (15, 2002)** America's gun culture **12.00** Premier League 360 — Big Sam's Bolton (r) (AD) **2.00am** Dart Kings (r) (AD) **5.00am-6.00** Discovering: Mel Gibson (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** Great War Stories (AD) **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases **5.00** Great War Stories (AD) **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** The Green Planet. A guide to plants that thrive in human-dominated environments (AD) **8.00** Canal Boat Diaries. Winsford to Weston Point (4/10) (AD) **9.00** Canal Boat Diaries. A trip from Runcorn to Middlewich (5/10) (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A 1969 MGB car (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **2.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **3.00am-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Backgammon Chris Bray

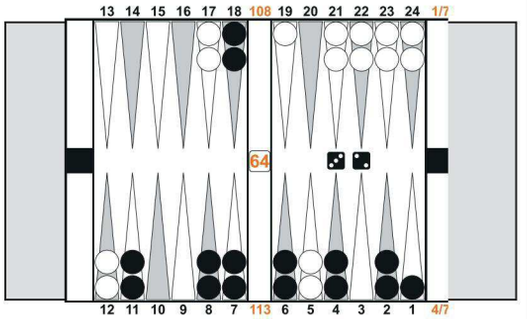
WBGF world championships

There has been a world team championship event since 2019, when the inaugural event was held in Montenegro. There are five players (and a reserve) in each team. Play is initially in groups, with the top teams qualifying for the play-off stages. So far 26 countries have registered for this year. The event is organised by the World Backgammon Federation (WBGF). Over the last few years, there has been growing discontent with the cost and organisation of the Monte Carlo world championship, so this year the WBGF is adding a world individual championship to the calendar. It will be interesting to compare the attendance figures for the two competing events.

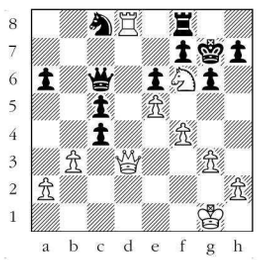
The WBGF events are held in a different location each year and this year London is the host, with the tournaments running from August 24 to 30. The location is the Mercure Hotel in Earls Court. Full details can be found at: ukbgf.com/wtc2026. This year I am taking a break from playing and will be leading the commentary team with my US colleague, Kent Goulding. Matches will be streamed on YouTube throughout the week. Spectators both online and live will be welcome. It promises to be a long but fascinating seven days of backgammon, with most of the world's top players in attendance, some of whom will join Kent and me when they can.

Our understanding of the game continues to evolve. How would you play this roll of 32 as Black? The gung-ho style of the 1970s would have come up with 11/6 or 11/9, 11/8. Nowadays Black would be wary of White's strong home board despite the blot on the 19-pt and would seek to play safely. The only move that is not a blunder is the very ugly 4/2, 4/1. With all of White's outer board points stripped, Black wants her to be the first one to break a point and leave shots.

Dirk Schiemann coined the idea of ugly plays, and he would be very proud of finding 4/2, 4/1. Our 1970s player would just laugh and accuse Black of cowardice, but then he was playing in a time before computers got involved in the game and radically changed some of the basic theory. *chrisbraybg@gmail.com*



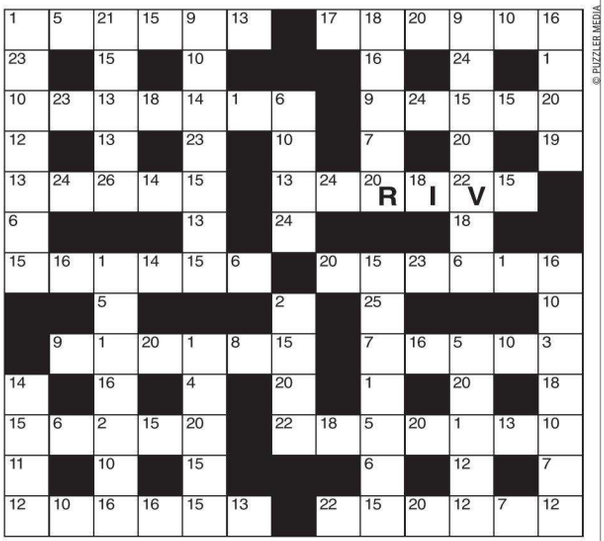
Winning Move



White to play.
This position is from Ivanchuk-Liu, Hong Kong 2026.

In the 1990s grandmaster Vasyl Ivanchuk was rated in the world's Top 10 and often spoken of as a future world champion. Ivanchuk has an amazing tactical imagination but has been held back – it is generally agreed – by poor nerves at critical moments. He retains his sharp tactical eye as can be seen here. How did he finish off?

Codeword No 5913



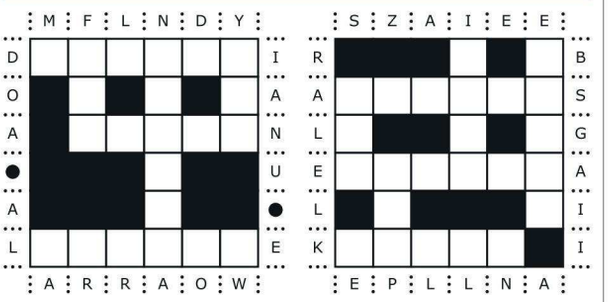
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 I	19	20 R	21	22 V	23	24	25	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

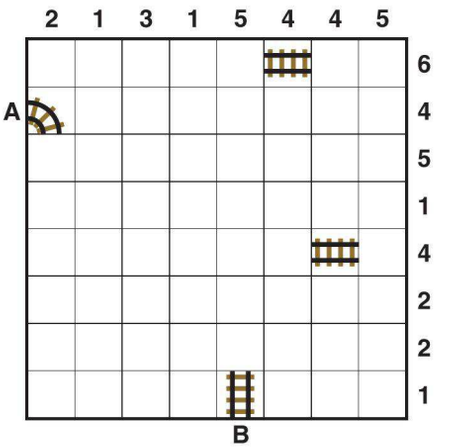
Cluelines Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9039 Hard No 9040



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2938



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2640

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Statue six collected by relative (5)

_ _ _ _ _

2 Wet edges of stump by large tree (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Soft start to opening section in movement (3,3)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Game interrupted by northern artist (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 City supporter finally sold car (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	B	C	D	D
D	D	E	F	H	H	I	K
L	N	O	O	O	P	P	P
R	R	R	S	S	T	V	Y

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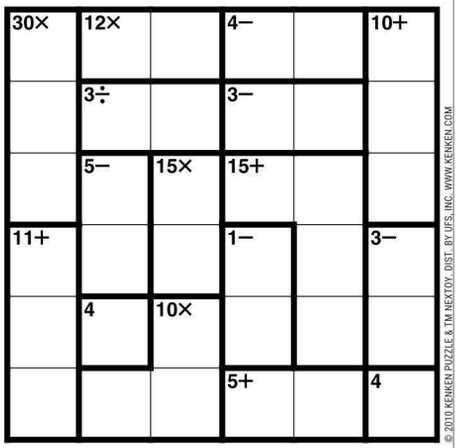
KenKen Difficult No 6905



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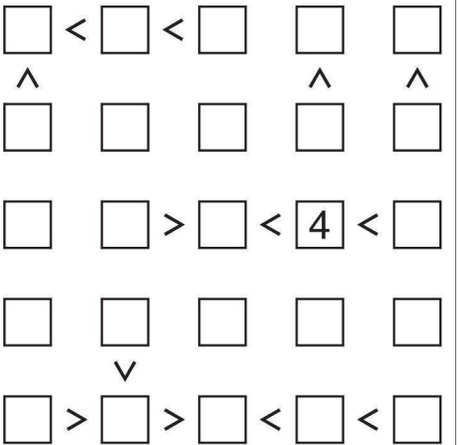
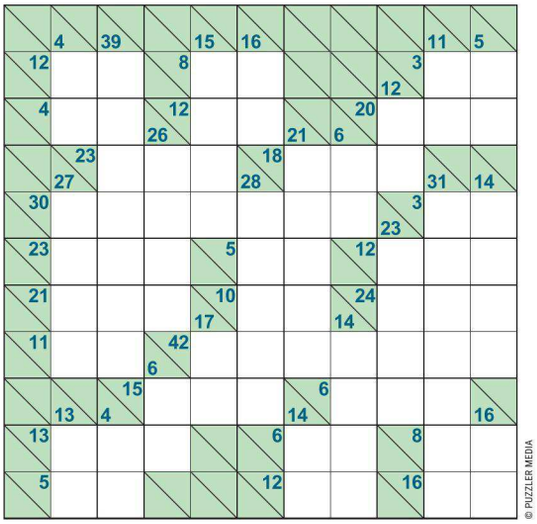
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5453



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4412



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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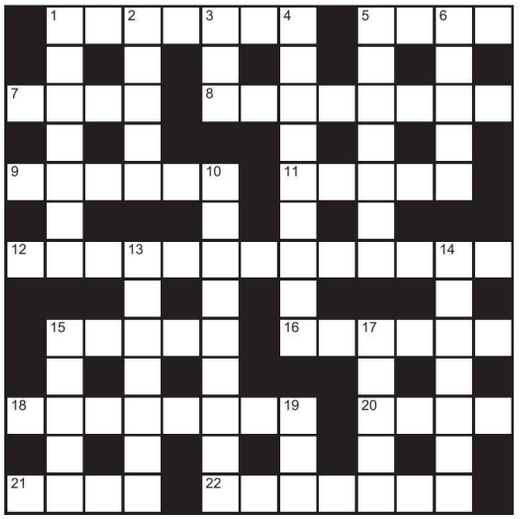
MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,229



Across

1 Colossal ancient tomb with triangular sides (7)
5 US Mormon state (4)
7 Formal academic garment (4)
8 Convince otherwise (8)
9 Gait faster than a canter (6)
11 --- Newton, polymath (5)
12 Equipment, kit (13)
15 Ejects (matter) forcefully, gushes out (5)
16 Hard deposit on teeth (6)
18 Giving more power or encouragement to (8)
20 Arrive (4)
21 Some (1,3)
22 Crossbred dog (7)

Down

1 Uninspiring, pedestrian (7)
2 Of the kidneys (5)
3 Soft wet earth (3)
4 Rebellious citizen (9)
5 Howl rhythmically (7)
6 Early form of sonar (5)
10 Element whose chemical symbol is K (9)
13 Supervised (7)
14 Hinder, constrain (7)
15 Eat gluttonously (5)
17 Speed competitor (5)
19 Blunderbuss, eg (3)

Solution to Crossword 10,228

S	U	N	D	E	R	L	A	N	D	■	F	■
N	■	U	■	N	■	M	■	O	H	I	O	■
O	L	D	E	S	T	■	P	■	G	■	A	■
W	■	I	■	H	■	S	L	O	W	I	N	G
D	I	S	G	R	A	C	E	■	O	■	C	■
R	■	T	■	I	■	U	■	M	O	D	E	M
O	■	■	I	N	S	T	E	A	D	■	■	I
P	H	O	N	E	■	T	■	C	■	O	■	S
■	A	■	C	■	A	L	P	H	A	B	E	T
I	G	N	O	B	L	E	■	I	■	T	■	R
■	G	■	M	■	I	■	A	S	S	U	M	E
C	L	U	E	■	B	■	■	M	■	S	■	A
■	E	■	R	A	I	N	F	O	R	E	S	T

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Top Twenty Conventions
2. Negative (Third Call) Double

This is a special type of take-out double guaranteeing the other major. It's (poorly) named as such to distinguish it from the positive ie penalty double. Because it's always the third call (after partner opens One-of-a-Suit and right-hand-opponent overcalls a suit), I'd like to rename it the "Third Call Double".

Take these common auctions.

(a) 1♣/♦-(1♠)-Dbl. This double guarantees hearts, typically four cards, in which case you could have any strength worth a call (a 2♥ bid would guarantee a fifth heart). However, you could have a fifth heart in a hand not worth a (forcing) 2♥ bid, about 6-9 points. Note, the double says nothing about the other minor, nor about being short in the opposing spades, so it's not really take-out as such. Eg ♠ 8642, ♥ KJ72, ♦ A2, ♣ 972.

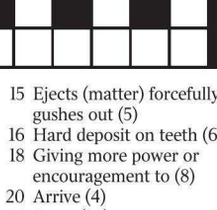
(b) 1♥-(2♣/♦)-Dbl. This negative double guarantees spades, usually four cards but could be more with about 6-9 points. Eg ♠ J8643, ♥ J2, ♦ A72, ♣ K65.

(c) 1♣/♦-(1♥)-Dbl. This negative double guarantees precisely four spades, never more as you can bid 1♠ with six points and a fifth card. Eg ♠ 9842, ♥ J52, ♦ K2, ♣ KJ65.

(d) 1♣-(1♦)-Dbl. This negative double — uniquely — gives guarantees about *two* suits, showing precisely four-four in the unbid majors. Eg ♠ Q842, ♥ AQ52, ♦ 9842, ♣ 5. Note, therefore, that in the auction 1♣-(1♦)-1♥/♠, responder may have only four cards in her major. Contrast the sequence 1♣-(1♦)-1♠ (where responder can have four spades) with 1♣-(1♥)-1♠ (where she must have a fifth spade).

(e) 1♦-(2♣)-Dbl. This negative double is far less specific. Because a 2♥/♠ bid by responder would guarantee a fifth card, the negative double has to cover a wide gamut of hands eg 4♠ -2♥, 3♠ -4♥. (Note to self, boldly overcall 2♣ over 1♦ as it's so hard for the next player.) Eg ♠ J7532, ♥ AJ2, ♦ Q32, ♣ J5.

(f) 1♣-(4♦)-Dbl. This is the highest negative double and, at such a high level, it's more general take-out than negative. Eg ♠ K9732, ♥ K32, ♦ 2, ♣ AJ93. — pull partner's 4♥ reply to 4♠, implying a fifth spade but also some club support.



S	W	N	E
		1♣	1♥
1♠ (1)	4♥ (2)	4♠ (3)	End

(1) Guarantees a fifth spade because double would show four spades.
(2) To the (ten-card) level of the fit.
(3) Knowing partner has a fifth spade.

West led ♥3 to ♥A, you ruffing East's ♥2 return with ♠2. At trick three, you try ♣2 to ♣Q. West wins ♣K and switches to ♦10. You win ♦A, cross to ♠AK, cash ♣A, ruff ♣3 and concede to ♠Q. You can then reach dummy via ♦K to cash clubs, and that's ten tricks made.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY	8	x 5	+ 12	÷ 4	+ 34	DOUBLE IT	– 22	÷ 12	x 3	+ 11
MEDIUM	17	x 3	– 27	x 6	÷ 12	x 8	+ 14	÷ 10	TIMES ITSELF	– 54
HARDER	19	x 3	+1/3 OF IT	+ 64	÷ 20	TIMES ITSELF	+3/7 OF IT	÷ 5	x 11	– 39

ANSWER

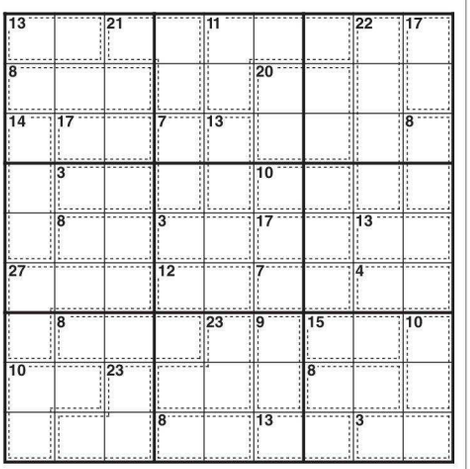
Polygon

From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 12 words, average; 16, good; 20, very good; 25, excellent

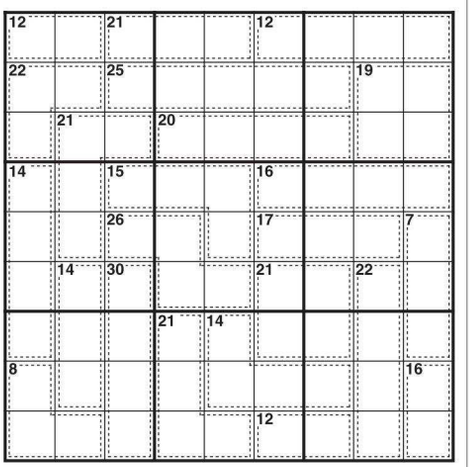
Yesterday's answers

metro, moor, moot, mope, moper, more, mort, mote, motor, ormer, perm, poem, pome, proem, prom, promo, promote, **promoter**, romer, romp, room, roomer, temp, tempo, term, tome, tremor, tromp

Killer Moderate No 10,864



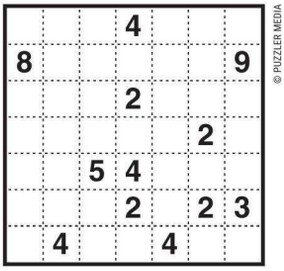
Killer Deadly No 10,865



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5796



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

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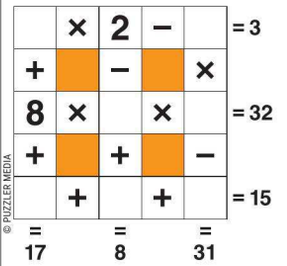
Set Square No 4415



Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

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Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3373

N	A	I	L	E	D	■	P	H	Y	S	I	O
E	■	N	■	M	■	■	A	■	I	■	D	■
P	Y	J	A	M	A	S	■	N	O	T	E	D
A	■	U	■	A	■	A	D	■	U	■	I	■
L	A	R	K	■	E	N	C	R	Y	P	T	S
I	■	E	■	P	■	D	■	A	■	■	H	■
■	D	A	L	M	A	T	I	A	N	■	■	■
T	■	■	A	■	L	■	L	■	E	■	M	■
A	B	S	E	N	T	L	Y	■	D	U	K	E
P	■	C	■	T	■	E	■	O	■	T	■	R
P	L	A	Z	A	■	D	I	V	O	R	C	E
E	■	R	■	I	■	■	E	■	A	■	L	■
D	E	F	I	N	E	■	F	R	I	L	L	Y

Codeword 5912

L	E	V	E	R	E	T	■	O	P	U	S	■
M	Y	X	■	X	■	C	■	E	■	I	■	■
A	I	R	S	H	I	P	■	L	I	B	E	L
R	■	I	■	I	■	A	■	A	■	B	■	D
Q	U	E	L	L	■	N	A	P	A	L	M	■
U	■	■	A	■	D	■	P	■	E	■	U	■
E	S	C	O	R	T	■	L	E	A	D	E	N
E	■	H	■	A	■	G	■	R	■	■	■	D
■	J	O	S	T	L	E	■	B	O	W	E	R
F	■	R	■	I	■	E	■	O	■	H	■	E
I	M	A	G	O	■	Z	E	A	L	O	U	S
S	■	L	■	N	■	E	■	R	■	L	■	S
T	R	E	K	■	D	R	E	D	G	E	R	■

Kakuro 4411

■	6	8	■	■	9	4	8	■
8	9	6	■	3	8	1	4	9
9	3	2	1	4	7	■	1	3	7
4	2	■	2	1	5	■	6	7	9
7	6	■	8	9	■	1	3	■
■	■	9	7	■	9	5	■	6	9
7	2	1	■	9	8	3	■	4	8
9	8	2	■	1	4	2	9	3	6
■	9	4	8	2	5	■	7	1	2
■	■	7	9	4	■	■	2	7	■

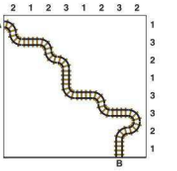
Sudoku 17,004

6	7	5	9	4	1	8	2	3
3	4	8	7	2	5	1	9	6
2	1	9	6	3	8	7	4	5
5	2	1	3	8	6	4	7	9
4	8	7	5	9	2	6	3	1
9	3	6	1	7	4	2	5	8
8	9	2	4	1	3	5	6	7
7	6	4	8	5	9	3	1	2
1	5	3	2	6	7	9	8	4

Tetonor 698

198	65	19	220
33 x 6	5 x 13	17 + 2	5 x 44
49	39	273	34
44 + 5	33 + 6	3 x 91	17 x 2
18	360	31	94
13 + 5	10 x 36	15 + 16	3 + 91
240	37	46	186
16 x 15	31 + 6	10 + 36	31 x 6

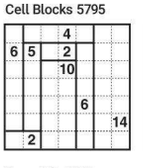
Train Tracks 2937



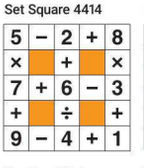
Sudoku 17,005

1	9	4	8	6	5	7	3	2
3	8	5	2	7	1	4	9	6
2	6	7	4	3	9	8	5	1
6	7	3	1	2	4	5	8	9
5	2	9	7	8	6	3	1	4
4	1	8	5	9	3	2	6	7
8	3	6	9	4	2	1	7	5
7	4	1	6	5	8	9	2	3
9	5	2	3	1	7	6	4	8

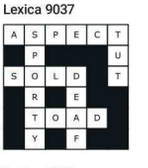
Cell Blocks 5795



Set Square 4414



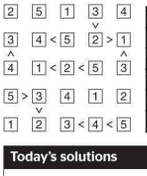
Lexica 9037



Sudoku 17,006

5	7	6	8	4	1	3	9	2
9	8	1	2	7	3	6	4	5
4	2	3	6	5	9	8	7	1
6	4	2	3	1	7	5	8	9
8	3	7	9	2	5	1	6	4
1	5	9	4	6	8	2	3	7
7	6	4	5	3	2	9	1	8
3	9	5	1	8	4	7	2	6
2	1	8	7	9	6	4	5	3

Futoshiki 5452



KenKen 6904

Lexica 9038

Killer 10,862

9	7	4	8	3	1	2	6	5
1	3	8	6	5	2	9	7	4
6	2	5	7	4	9	3	8	1
2	8	1	9	6	7	5	4	3
3	9	6	5	8	4	7	1	2
4	5	7	2	1	3	6	9	8
8	1	9	3	7	5	4	2	6
5	4	2	1	9	6	8	3	7
7	6	3	4	2	8	1	5	9

Killer 10,863

7	6	5	9	3	4	2	1	8
1	4	8	5	6	2	9	7	3
3	9	2	1	8	7	4	5	6
9	1	7	8	4	6	5	3	2
4	8	6	3	2	5	1	9	7
5	2	3	7	9	1	6	8	4
8	3	4	2	1	9	7	6	5
6	5	9	4	7	8	3	2	1
2	7	1	6	5	3	8	4	9

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 At ease
2 Crèche
3 Dredge
4 Extent
5 Eye level

Cryptic Quintagram
1 David
2 Splash
3 Pop art
4 Hockney
5 Bradford

Sakuro 4814

Brain Trainer
Easy 29
Medium 67
Harder 115

Word watch

Macrology (c) Verbose but meaningless talk (*Collins*)
Deglutition (a) The act of swallowing (*Chambers*)
Remolade (b) A horse's hoof ointment (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 Rxf8! is a lovely demonstration of the power of rook and knight when they cooperate effectively: 1 ... cxd3 (1 ... Kxf8 2 Qd8+ Kg7 3 Qg8+ Kh6 4 Qxh7 mate) 2 Rg8+ Kh6 3 g4! and mate on g5 is unstoppable

Quiz

1 Shark **2** Nashville **3** Seven **4** Margaret Thatcher **5** Ireland **6** Notre-Dame de Paris **7** *Blithe Spirit* **8** René Magritte **9** Mary Bennet **10** Katharine Hamnett **11** Brazil **12** Special purpose acquisition company **13** Lindy Morrison, formerly of the Go-Betweens **14** Women's British Open **15** Prince George (of Wales)

THE TIMES

07.08.26

MindGames

Word watch
David Parfitt

Macrology
a A mixed English and Latin phrase
b Any unified field of study
c Verbose but meaningless talk

Deglutition
a The act of swallowing
b The breakdown of adhesive bonds
c The removal of excess matter

Remolade
a A fulsome expression of contrition
b A horse's hoof ointment
c A plaster cast of the back teeth

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 17,007

1	3			7			2	5
8	5		4		9		7	3
			9	4	1			
		1				8		
	2	9				5	4	
		6				7		
			6	8	7			
9		8				1		6

Difficult No 17,008

				8			1	
7	2				1			
		8	7			6		
	3	9	5	2	7			8
	8	2	1	9	6			3
		5	9			3		
8	9				4			
				3			2	

Fiendish No 17,009

	9		2		3		5	
		8	9		6	4		
		3		2		7		
			8		4			
	4	5				6	2	
8								1
			6		1			
4	1			7			9	3

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 The great white species of which predatory fish has 300 triangular, serrated teeth?

2 "Music City" and "Nash Vegas" are nicknames for which city in Tennessee?

3 In the Bible, how many books constitute the "Heptateuch"?

4 Which Tory prime minister said that the sitcom *Yes, Minister* had given her "hours of pure joy"?

5 The Easter Rising of 1916 took place in which modern-day country?

6 Distances are measured from Paris

Point Zéro, just outside which cathedral on the Île de la Cité?

7 *Geisterkomödie* ("Ghost Comedy") is a German title of which 1941 play by Noël Coward?

8 *Not to be Reproduced* (1937) is which Belgian painter's portrait of the surrealist patron Edward James?

9 What is the name of the title heroine of Janice Hadlow's novel *The Other Bennet Sister*?

10 Which English fashion designer launched her "choose life" slogan T-shirt in 1983?

11 Aracaju is the capital of Sergipe, the smallest state by area in which South American country?

12 In finance, SPAC is an acronym for which investment vehicle?

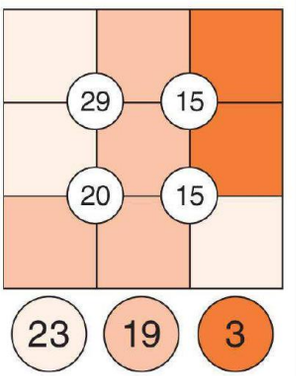
13 Which Australian drummer is the subject of Tracey Thorn's 2021 book *My Rock 'n' Roll Friend*?

14 In 1976, Jenny Lee Smith won the inaugural edition of which tournament at Fulford Golf Club in York?

15 Which prince is pictured?

Answers on page 15

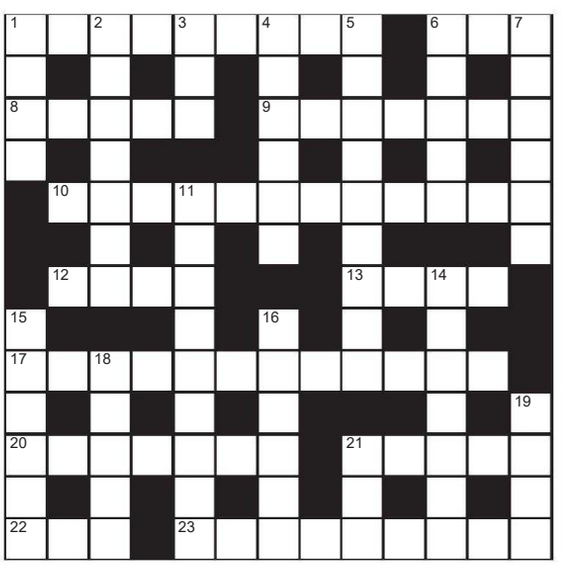
Sakuro
No 4814



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3374 by Asp



Across
1 What contains books, fish and net? (9)
6 Mock company director's first letter (3)
8 Animal arrived then left (5)
9 Petulant move of uncle getting upset (7)
10 Bricks stop piercing winds (6,6)
12 Cut nails back (4)
13 I goofed up over operations (4)
17 Article less about instructive experience (6,6)
20 Send on attacker (7)
21 Give birth with assistance (5)
22 Crash into back of car in the morning (3)
23 Men in high places persecuting individual (9)

Down
1 Fire rifle (4)
2 Most valuable baseball hit in career (4,3)
3 Member of parliament's constituents from Cowley (3)
4 Lie about US agent's hit (6)
5 Fairness seems to follow virtue (4,5)
6 He thinks the worst of people in fancy niches (5)
7 Smart doctor starts to examine serious case of scurvy (6)
11 Suppose social worker, for example, is with child (9)
14 Professional sporting event in March? (7)
15 Sound of person expelling air from lungs and chest (6)
16 Small burger in new deli's range to begin with (6)
18 Joy failing to finish drink in large bowl (5)
19 Boom box (4)
21 You and I filled with love and grief (3)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE TIMES

FRIDAY AUGUST 7 2026

Bricks & Mortar

Inside
I split with my ex three years ago — now we 'nest' together **Page 8**

Plus
My £400k flats were my pension — they're now worthless **Page 10**

Buy. Sell. Move. Improve. **Your weekly property guide**

Balancing act

Is it cheaper to pay rent each month or have a mortgage?

Owning v renting: which is cheaper?

Mortgage costs are high and property values are stagnating. We crunch the numbers to find out in which areas tenants and buyers are better off. By David Byers

PROPERTY BAROMETER

95%

Buyers in the UK who faced unexpected costs during their home move in the last year

Source: PEXA

Dear or dirt cheap

The most and least affordable student towns

	Rent per week
London	£330
Edinburgh	£290
Bristol	£278
Middlesbrough	£103
Huddersfield	£98
Pontypridd	£84

Source: Accommodation for Students

23,000

Households expected to move house – four times the daily average – on Friday, August 28, the busiest moving day in 2026

Source: HomeOwners' Alliance

Time to sell and move home

Deals take far longer in England and Wales compared with Scotland, where the buying process is different

	Days finding buyer	Days to complete purchase	Total ave days to move
London	70	174	244
East of England	66	171	237
Southeast	67	170	237
Southwest	69	164	233
Wales	66	155	221
Great Britain	62	154	216
West Midlands	62	153	215
Northwest	57	152	209
East Midlands	68	150	218
Yorks & Humber	62	145	207
Northeast	53	141	194
Scotland	29	98	127

Source: Rightmove

£4.1 billion

Annual cost to the rental sector of fraudulent tenancy applications

Source: Goodlord

Planning push

Developers have applied to build 100,000 more homes in the year to June compared with last year

2022	409,107
2023	349,831
2024	301,267
2025	316,418
2026	412,130

Totals are for England, in the year to Q2

Source: TerraQuest/Planning Portal

Should you carry on renting, or is now a good time to buy a home? If you're wrestling with this question you're far from alone. When it comes to the cost pressures facing tenants and buyers, many things have changed in recent years.

On one hand, costs for tenants spiralled in many urban areas after Covid as workers flocked back to cities. This led to rents rising by a record 10.2 per cent in the year to November 2023. This trend has cooled significantly since, the property portal Zoopla recording a rise of 2.1 per cent in the average cost of new lets in the year to June. However, there's evidence that rising taxes and new renters' rights rules have led landlords to sell off rental properties. This is causing a shortage of supply in some areas, with 25 per cent fewer homes available to rent than before the pandemic.

There have been plenty of challenges for buyers too. Since 2022 mortgage interest rate rises have made the days of sub-1 per cent home loans a distant memory. This has shown little sign of easing since the Iran war began in February, with the average two and five-year fixed rates sitting at 5.52 per cent, according to Moneyfacts. Costs have risen for buyers too — particularly first-time buyers since stamp duty discounts ended and the Help to Buy scheme was wound up.

Beyond the broad national trends there are significant regional variations. Hyperlocal factors such as the proximity of schools, bakeries and public transport, as well as the quality of housing stock, cause huge fluctuations in the costs of buying and renting.

So, given all this turbulence, where is it cheaper to own a property and where is it cheaper to rent? We asked the experts at Connells Group, the UK's largest high street estate and lettings agency, which has more than 1,200 branches and the country's most extensive sales and lettings database. They crunched the numbers for us and came up with a definitive guide.

Of course, as everyone knows, there is one big benefit to buying, and that's the ownership of an asset that may grow in value. But with house prices declining in the past five years in many areas (by as much as a fifth if inflation is taken into account), accumulating wealth in your property is no longer guaranteed.

Affluent areas are the priciest for owners

The main finding in England and Wales's most affluent areas is that the monthly cost of owning a property remains more expensive than renting one — despite the post-Covid rental increases.

Renting is cheaper by the greatest margin in the southwest London borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The average purchase price is £1.28 million, and the average monthly mortgage is £5,391, compared with £3,611 rent — a £1,780 difference. (This is arguably an anomaly, since many in the royal borough are cash buyers.)

Buying is more expensive in the affluent Surrey borough of Elmbridge too (£3,092 for a mortgage versus £1,833 in rent, and an average purchase price of £735,722), as it is in the southwest suburb of Richmond upon Thames (£3,332 for a mortgage and £2,289 for rent, and an average price of £792,844).

Given the steep cost of property in Kensington, it would take 29.6 years of paying rent before you paid the average house price there, while in Elmbridge it would take 33.4 years and in Richmond it would take 28.9.

Other places where it is more affordable to rent than buy include St Albans in Hertfordshire (£1,915 to rent versus £2,639 in mortgage costs) and the Derbyshire Dales (£792 to rent versus average mortgage costs of £1,455).

Rory Wallace, the head of regional lettings for Savills in southwest London, says would-be buyers remain hesitant in the capital — and this is because of political uncertainty as well as cost. "While economic uncertainty and ongoing questions around future house price growth are factors, the decision is increasingly being driven by simple economics. For some households the cost of a mortgage, maintaining a property and funding a significant deposit can outweigh the benefits of ownership, especially if it's a shorter-term move."

Data from BuiltPlace backs this up, showing that borrowers are paying more in mortgage interest than in repayments for the first time in more than a decade (£65.9 billion versus £63.1 billion).

Marc Schneiderman, a director at Arlington Residential, an estate agency covering some of the more affluent neighbourhoods in north London, says that few renters can afford property in swathes of the capital without parental help, leaving many with no choice but to remain in the lettings market. "Our research shows that less than 5 per cent of would-be buyers are in a financial position to buy without the help of their parents or grandparents," he says.

Price drops coming — could this change the picture?

Where homes are so expensive that buyers stay away, the rules of supply and demand take over, and price drops inevitably follow as sellers become more desperate. Zoopla said last week that sales agreed in July were down 9 per cent on last year, while the number of homes being put up for sale was up by 3 per cent.

Meanwhile, recent Times research suggests that, when taking inflation into account, there has been a real-terms fall in house prices of 17.8 per cent between October 2021 and March this year.

Sara Ransom from Stacks Property Search says that prices in Kensington and Chelsea, for example, have fallen by 10 per cent in the past year. "Prices may continue to soften in the short term," she adds.

For now, the market in the southeast remains sluggish. Rightmove data released last week shows that in London it takes 174 days — nearly six months — from a sale being agreed to completion, the longest since records began. Things may speed up if prices continue to fall.

Look north for the cheapest homes

Meanwhile, towns and cities other than London (and the capital's most affordable areas) dominate the list of

Is it cheaper to rent or to buy in your area?
Search our table
thetimes.com

To rent or own?

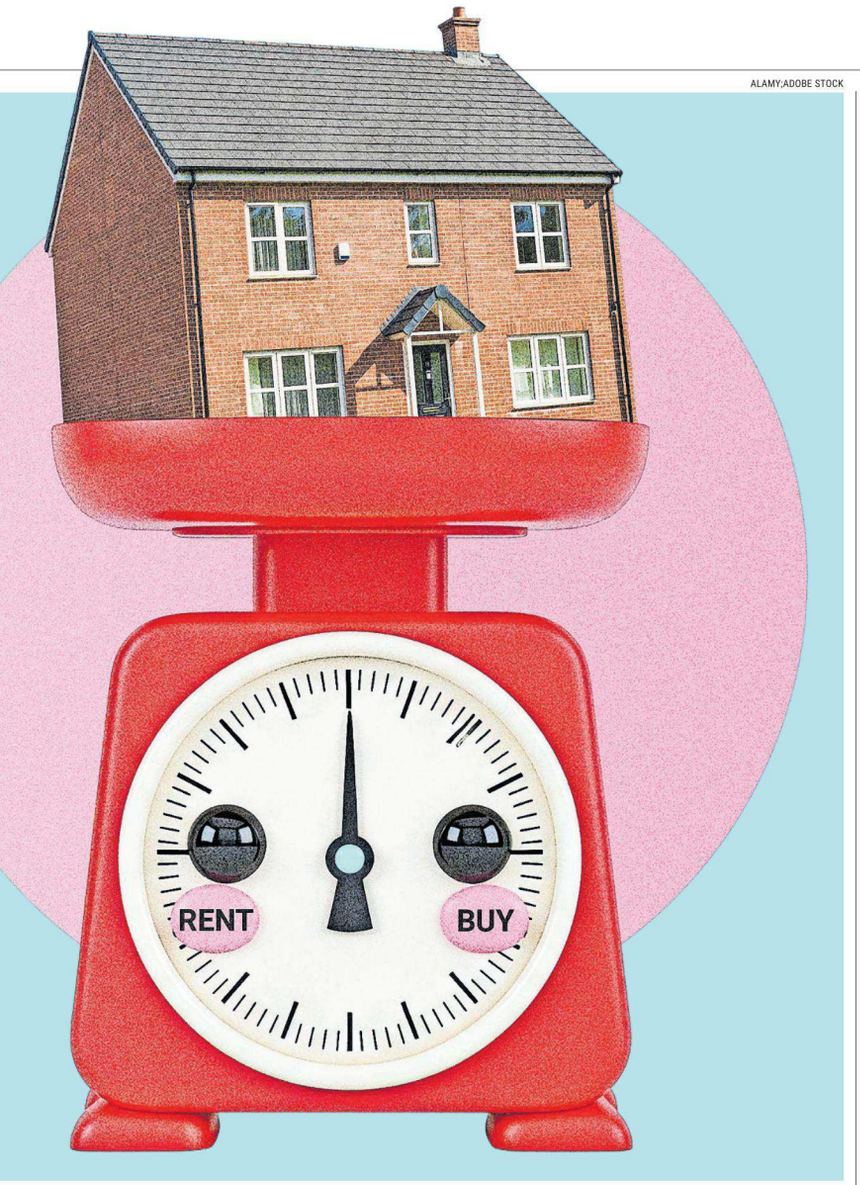
Three areas where renting is cheaper

Local authority	Purchase price	Mortgage payment	Rent*
Kensington and Chelsea	£1,282,637	£5,391	£3,611
Elmbridge	£735,722	£3,092	£1,833
Richmond upon Thames	£792,844	£3,332	£2,289

Three areas where owning is cheaper

Tower Hamlets	£459,208	£1,930	£2,401
Bristol	£350,164	£1,472	£1,888
Newcastle upon Tyne	£206,715	£869	£1,201

*Data shows averages for price, monthly mortgage and rental payments. Source: Connells Group



ALAMY;ADOBE STOCK

places where the monthly cost of owning is cheaper than renting — house prices are cheaper and mortgages more affordable.

In the two cheapest London boroughs, Tower Hamlets and Newham (average house prices £459,208 and £390,057 respectively), it is cheaper to own than to rent — by £471 and £275 in monthly costs — owing to the new-build housing stock. This is also true of a series of northern towns and regional centres, including Newcastle upon Tyne (£332 cheaper to buy per month), Manchester (£293 cheaper per month) and Nottingham (£195 cheaper per month).

If you rented in Tower Hamlets it would take 15.9 years before you paid the area's average house price in rental payments — half the years you'd spend paying rent in Kensington — while this would be 15.5 years in Bristol and 14.3 years in Newcastle.

Yet experts say that the calculation often varies between postcodes. Jake Rowson, a sales director at Ryder & Dutton, a Manchester estate agency that is part of the Leaders Roman Group, says: "In north Manchester, whether it works out cheaper to buy than to rent really comes down to where you are on the price ladder. At around £125,000 — a two-bedroom apartment in Blackley, say — a buyer with even a modest deposit can find the monthly cost of owning sits well below what the same flat would let for. Move up towards £300,000 and that gap narrows sharply, so it isn't a blanket rule across the borough."

Nick Maud, a lead analyst at Connells Group, says the affordability of homes in cities other than London and cheaper suburbs means that renters are moving to those areas in ever greater numbers. "There are still places where ownership represents better value than renting, with average monthly payments more than £300 cheaper in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, Bristol, Newcastle and Portsmouth. While these areas are geographically diverse, their common thread is that they tend to be more urban in character, with cheaper house prices.

"Yet for many, saving for a deposit remains a significant challenge to making that leap. Regular rental payments that often account for a meaningful share of a tenant's income add to this difficulty. Stamp duty also acts as a barrier, particularly in London, where the upfront cost is substantial. This can make renting the more appealing option in the capital."

The fact that northern cities — with their more affordable property prices — are mostly cheaper to own in rather than rent in is reflected in Scotland. A separate dataset by Connells covering north of the border shows that, here, renting is cheaper than buying in only two local authorities — Perth and Kinross (by £92 — the difference between a £917 mortgage cost and £825 in rent) and East Dunbartonshire (by £6 — £1,118 versus £1,111). These areas' property prices — at £218,187 and £265,936 respectively — are well above Scotland's average of £188,548.

What £650,000 buys you in …

Gloucestershire

The Old School House spans more than 2,200 sq ft and is one of the most striking homes in central Stroud. Period charm and stone mullion windows are the initial draws, while inside there are four bedrooms plus a separate wing with a 16ft living room, a bathroom and a bedroom. Outside there is off-road parking, a good-sized garden, and a separate workshop. Stroud is a much-loved bohemian town, with good shops and schools and the Cotswolds on the doorstep.
EPC E (potential C) — on a scale of A (best) to G (worst)
Upside Self-contained annexe for lettings, staff or relatives.
Downside Cosmetic work needed.
Contact hamptons.co.uk

Cambridgeshire

Owned by the same family for almost three decades, Blackberry Farm has 2,287 sq ft of living space on half an acre of land. The village of Friday Bridge is three miles south of Wisbech, a historic market town known as the capital of the fens. The house has three reception rooms plus a 20ft x 15ft kitchen/dining room and a conservatory. Upstairs are five bedrooms and a bathroom. There are lawned gardens and mature trees, plus extensive outbuildings including a garage, a carport and stores.
EPC E (potential B)
Upside No onward chain.
Downside Poor bedroom-to-bathroom ratio.
Contact sowerbys.com

Co Durham

Middlestone Lodge, an ivy-clad stone-built Edwardian home, has uninterrupted countryside views towards the Cleveland Hills and North Yorkshire Dales. It has an entrance hall, library, dining room and sitting room plus a workshop and utility spaces. Upstairs there are four bedrooms, a bathroom and study. It has original features including high ceilings, ceiling roses and stone fireplaces. It is on the edge of Kirk Merrington, a village a 15-minute drive from Durham.
EPC F (potential D)
Upside Pretty south-facing garden with a patio, a lawn, a garage and a greenhouse.
Downside You can't let it out because of the EPC rating.
Contact finest.co.uk

Or… two flats in Cornwall

These two one-bedroom apartments are in the middle of Padstow, a few moments' walk from the harbour. One has a balcony, while the other has a sheltered rooftop terrace with quay views. Both have open-plan living/cooking/dining areas and are stylishly decorated. The leases on the properties, which are popular holiday lets, have 988 years remaining.
EPC D/D (potential C/C)
Upside An attractive investment opportunity in this foodie paradise.
Downside Watch out for heavy tax rises on holiday lets.
Contact johnbrayestates.co.uk

‘I moved to Devon’s blue zone’

Water sports, beach yoga, fresh food and community make for a calmer and happier life

Devon is somewhere we’ve always loved and it has a reputation for being one of the healthiest places to live in the country, similar to the famous “blue zones” you hear about: those pockets of the world, like Sardinia or Okinawa, Japan, where people regularly live past 100. The official hotspot is east Devon, about 40 miles up the coast from us, but living here in the South Hams, by the water and with the same slower pace of life, I understand why the whole county has built that reputation [*says Faye Bosley, 50*].

Our daughters, 22 and 26, left university and both got jobs. We became empty-nesters and knew this was the time to think about our next chapter. After dedicating my life to being their mum, working as a nanny and looking after the home, we wanted to focus on our wellbeing and happiness. We sold our house in Camberley, Surrey, without finding another property — with just six weeks until completion, it left us facing the prospect of homelessness.

I triggered the Devon plan. Basing myself in Kingsbridge, I looked tirelessly at rental property after rental property. We eventually took somewhere in the town and quickly settled into life by the water. It’s a market town with everything you need and lots of independent shops, and being situated at the head of the Kingsbridge estuary, life revolves around the coast and the countryside. Water is such a leveller and there’s a sense of calm for the people who live beside it.

Everything immediately slotted into place here. The neighbours were welcoming and greeted us with coffee and cake. We’d have loved to have bought a house in Kingsbridge, particularly as we began to make good friends, but it’s an expensive town and very popular with second-home owners. Our budget was £500,000 so we opted for a bungalow in Chillington, a village ten minutes away by car. The nearest beach is five minutes away at Torcross. It’s become a routine to go down to the sea before breakfast most days.

THOMAS FAULL /GETTY IMAGES

Top: Kingsbridge in Devon. Above: Faye Bosley paddleboarding

We absolutely love it and we’re so much healthier for it. Almost everything I do here revolves around the water. I’ve joined a cold-water swimming group. We go in for about 20 minutes and then chat while warming up. I also do Waterborn’s weekly women’s paddleboarding session, at different spots around the South Hams — sometimes in the estuary, sometimes out to sea, depending on the tide.

It’s a brilliant way to start the day, gliding along the water with a group of women, all chatting and laughing, taking in the scenery from a completely different angle. I also enjoy beach yoga at Bantham, one of the most beautiful beaches in Devon — stretching out on the sand with the waves rolling in is about as good as wellness gets.

We have many friends who own boats, so there are regular trips out on the water in the summer, and I kayak with my old neighbours from Kingsbridge. We may have moved away from the town itself but those friendships have stuck and a paddle on the estuary together is the perfect excuse to catch up. We love that life here isn’t commercial — we enjoy swimming in the sea and the slower pace of life.

There are so many amazing coastal footpaths: either along the Kingsbridge side of the estuary or over the water at Salcombe, where you can walk up to Bolt Head and beyond. Many of these activities are free too, so we’re better off financially. Everyone seems to have time here to stop and chat. It feels like people aren’t interested in competing, which we found was part of life in Surrey.

We eat well too, with so much fresh local produce on our doorstep, from the fishmongers to the farm shops, and that feels like another piece of the puzzle. It’s part of the blue zone secret, really: it’s not one thing, it’s the combination of moving your body every day without ever thinking of it as exercise, eating well, having a sense of purpose and feeling connected to others.

I feel much calmer, happier and healthier. The fresh air, the sea swims and the paddleboarding all re-energise me and the deep sense of community here has helped us feel mentally stronger and happier too. We didn’t have the same sense of that in Surrey — and at 50 I feel like I’m only just getting started.

Interview by Annie Hayes

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Contact: 0330 333 1060 £2,000,000

CHICHESTER WEST SUSSEX
One of Chichester's most distinguished addresses — an award winning Grade II Listed 15th century townhouse, fully refurbished and reimagined.
EPC: C | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01243 908077 £1,850,000

SOUTHPORT MERSEYSIDE
A luxury family home finished to an exceptional standard, featuring a spa-inspired leisure suite and magnificent entertaining spaces.
EPC: C | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold *offers over*
Contact: 01704 205021 £1,600,000

GREAT HORMEAD HERTFORDSHIRE
A stunning four bedroom detached home set within a plot of approximately 1.5 acres, with a detached barn and beautiful landscaped gardens.
EPC: D | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01920 443898 £1,500,000

BRANDON SUFFOLK
An outstanding detached seven bedroom home set in 3.5 acres of formal gardens and woodland, with indoor leisure facilities including a pool, entertainment room and bar.
EPC: D | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01284 718822 £1,500,000

NEWBURY BERKSHIRE
Malt Cottage is a spacious four bedroom, two bathroom, three reception, Grade II Listed 18th century property with a wealth of character.
EPC: E | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold *OIEO*
Contact: 01635 30303 £1,100,000

FURNESS VALE DERBYSHIRE
Yeardsley Hall is a Grade II Listed masterpiece in High Peak, offering 1.09 acres, three bedrooms, four bathrooms, two reception rooms and no onward chain.
EPC: D | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01298 808082 £995,000

CROWLAND LINCOLNSHIRE
Exceptional Georgian-style country home in a rural setting offering 3 acres, four bedrooms, ancillary accommodation, stables, triple garage and fenland views.
EPC: B | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold *offers over*
Contact: 01780 750200 £900,000

STAINFORTH NORTH YORKSHIRE
Unique Grade II Listed 17th century farmhouse with four bedrooms, a one bedroom annexe, a barn and a generous garden, offering period charm and remarkable potential.
EPC: E | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01200 420747 £795,000

SAUL GLOUCESTER
Spacious village home with four double bedrooms, a bespoke farmhouse kitchen, versatile living spaces, mature gardens, eco-friendly features and excellent transport links.
EPC: C | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01453 751661 £740,000

WEST DRAYTON MIDDLESEX
Distinctive Grade II Listed residence occupying a prominent position overlooking the historic green in West Drayton.
EPC: D | Council Tax: D | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 0203 912 3425 £725,000

MYTHOLMROYD WEST YORKSHIRE
A substantial Grade II Listed family home combining period character with elegant modern living, set within an exclusive cobbled courtyard overlooking the Calder Valley.
EPC Exempt | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01422 410723 £695,000

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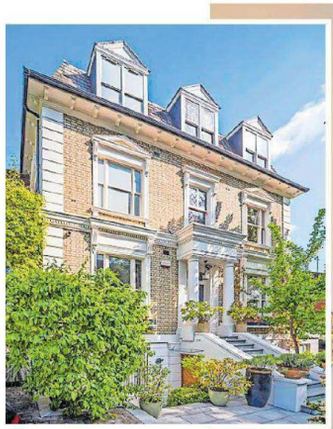


The Victorian villa was owned by Lynsey de Paul, far right, for six years. Below: the dining table is handmade from a slab of fossilised Australian wood

Lynsey de Paul's £4.85m London retreat

The singer-songwriter's former home has been revamped by its current owners into part spiritual sanctuary and part modernist townhouse. David Byers takes a tour

The four-floor Italianate Victorian villa is an arresting sight as it looms above you at the end of Fairfax Road, two minutes' walk from arterial Finchley Road in northwest London. With neoclassical columns, double front doors and stained-glass windows, this grand pile looks like something you might find in a secluded corner of Belgravia rather than in a built-up area surrounded on all sides by flats and sports courts close to Swiss Cottage Tube station.

But the splendour of the house, combined with the anonymity of the location, is probably what attracted the British singer-songwriter Lynsey de Paul to buy it, paying cash, in the mid-1990s.

De Paul had emerged from a traumatic home life in nearby Cricklewood, during which she suffered brutal beatings by her father, to reach musical superstardom in the 1970s, recording the global hit *Sugar Me* in 1972 and becoming the first woman to collect an Ivor Novello award, for *Won't Somebody Dance With Me* in 1973. Between 1972 and 1977 she wrote or co-wrote 14 UK top 40 hits (for herself and others) and nine primetime British television series. In 1977 she narrowly missed out on a second consecutive Eurovision victory for the UK with *Rock Bottom*, performed with Mike Moran.

In the 1980s de Paul had bought a gothic-style property in the north London suburb of Highgate, which she had named Moot Grange (an anagram of No Mortgage) to symbolise her success.

By 1995, when she paid £640,000 in cash for the 4,000 sq ft pile on Fairfax Road, she was believed to want a place away from the gaze of the media, having been involved in a number of affairs, including with the songwriter Bernie Taupin, the footballer George Best, the actor Sean Connery and the Beatles' Ringo Starr. Unmarried without children despite receiving as many as five proposals, she used her Swiss Cottage home as a retreat in which to write.

Nibs Lakhani, a director at Goldschmidt & Howland — the agency that presided over de Paul's subsequent sale of the house in 2001 to the Groves family for what official records show to be £1 million — says de Paul guarded her privacy. Agency files record repeatedly that she requested the sale be carried out "very discreetly" with "no advertising", and that she should not be identified as the seller.

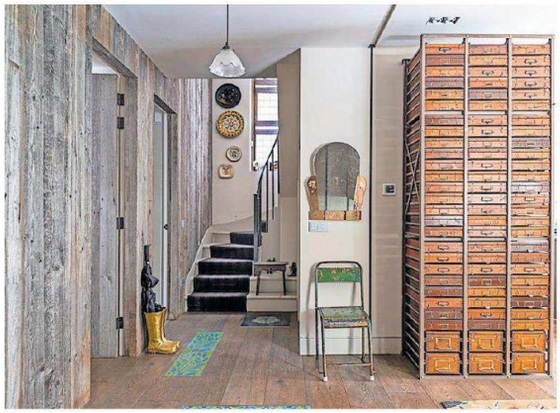
After selling the house the singer downsized to Mill Hill, living with a three-legged cat called Tripod, before she died of a brain haemorrhage in 2014 at the age of 66. "She was quite a character," Lakhani says, recalling dealing with her on several occasions at her Mill Hill address, while his late Goldschmidt predecessor handled the Fairfax Road sale.

After the 2001 de Paul sale Goldschmidt sold the property again in 2003 for £1.6 million to the radio presenter Jonathan "Jono" Coleman and his family. Coleman, who was a household name in British broadcasting across multiple networks, moved to Australia in 2006 with his family, and the agency sold the house again to the Indian financier Alok Bhalla and his wife, Anjali, who had two young children, for £2.6 million. It was Anjali, a fashion designer, who spearheaded the remarkable transformation of the house in 2013, working with the high-end interior designer Shalini Misra.

Defining the precise genre of the decor in the four-bedroom house is almost impossible — and, according to Anjali, that is exactly what she intended. "I go with my gut. And I go with what feels right for me," she says.

Zero expense has been spared in transforming the inside of the house into something that might be described as part maharajah's palace, part spiritual sanctuary and part modernist townhouse, and somewhere Anjali says has a "special energy".

For example, in the dining room on the ground floor is a table handmade from a slab of fossilised Australian wood. This room and the drawing room across the hallway, still with their original Victorian coving, towering ceilings and sash windows, have huge pieces of artwork depicting symbols from Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, mixed with modern conceptual pieces.

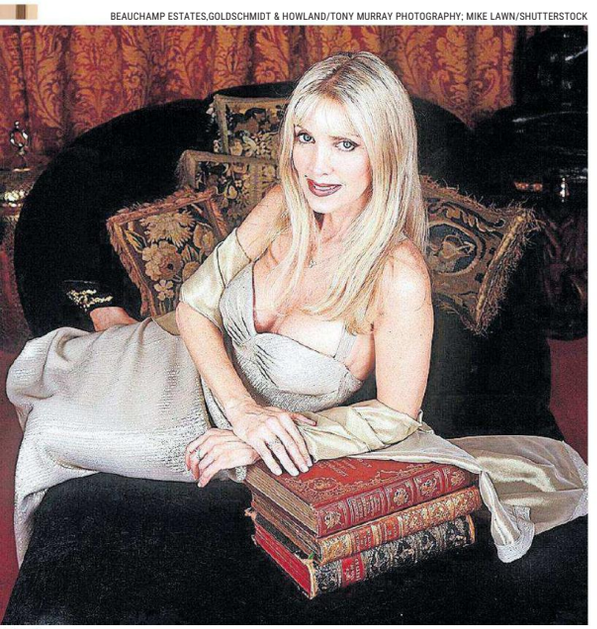


The kitchen has a colonial-era filing unit from the British Museum

"I believe definitions are limiting — there are no limitations to spirituality," says Anjali, who is Hindu.

In the basement is the house's showstopper — a huge open-plan kitchen with a lava-stone worktop and seating area. Cut into the wooden floor are blue geometric patterned tiles Anjali bought from a Belgian artist in her eighties when they were on a family holiday with their two daughters. To the side, meanwhile, is an intricately designed British colonial-era storage unit with multiple sliding drawers, previously used in the British Museum, which Anjali bought from Retrouvius, a salvage shop, along with numerous other items. "Some things are old, some things are contemporary," she explains, adding that she was influenced by her time living in India, Singapore and Hong Kong.

BEAUCHAMP ESTATES,GOLDSCHMIDT & HOWLAND/TONY MURRAY PHOTOGRAPHY; MIKE LAWN/SHUTTERSTOCK



Outside, through double doors from the kitchen, is a cocooning landscaped garden. Anjali planted the garden about ten years ago, and there are seasonal pink roses and mimosas and a now-mature birch tree. A secluded pathway zigzags around the house towards the front drive and entrance gates. The family use an outhouse for meditation.

As Alok approaches retirement the couple, who have two adult daughters, intend to buy a smaller home in Hampstead, while keeping other homes in Italy and Portugal. Selling the house on Fairfax Road, however, is not proving easy. Almost a year ago they listed the house for £5.35 million and have dropped the price significantly to £4.85 million, jointly selling through Aston Chase and Goldschmidt & Howland.

Why is it so tough? Mark Pollack, Aston Chase's co-founder, admits the difficulty in selling the house is troublesome, in part, because the original price was too ambitious given the slowdown at the top end of the market. This has been caused by the abolition of non-dom status plus a rise in stamp duty, expensive mortgages and global instability. "The whole dynamic of the market has significantly changed," he says. "It's been one curveball after another, really."

Despite this, sales in the £5 million-plus market have crept up slightly from the historic lows experienced in the first three months of the year, Savills has found, although Beauchamp Estates believes this is largely the result of Gulf buyers replacing departing Londoners since the start of the Iran war.

Another difficulty is the house's location. Pollack admits quietly that, were it a few hundred yards further in the direction of South Hampstead, away from Finchley Road and in a less built-up area, it would gather greater interest.

Plus, he adds, such flamboyant design — however incredible it might be to look at — won't appeal to everyone. "To find a buyer who appreciates everything of such an eclectic nature is probably quite challenging," he says, to which Anjali jokingly replies: "Well, I won't sell then!"

However, Lakhani, at Goldschmidt & Howland, suggests that the artwork and design features are hugely attractive to many buyers with eclectic or artistic tastes. "The people I showed yesterday, straight away their first question was, will they leave their art?" De Paul, you suspect, would have approved of such a sense of style.

> Some things are old, some things are contemporary

T

Gardening: resilient plants for a hotter Britain

In The Sunday Times Home section and online thetimes.com

The quietest heat pumps (which can also cool) — picked by experts

Whether your home is large or small, new or retrofitted, keep it cosy and cool with these models that are certified to be no-noise. By Poppy Szkiler

Two thirds of people say noise would influence their decision to fit a heat pump — and it would stop almost a quarter from getting one altogether, according to a YouGov survey for Quiet Mark.

My acoustics team at Quiet Mark — a certification programme for the world's quietest products — whittled down a bewildering choice of more than 850 heat pumps on the market to find this year's no-noise models. An extraordinary 60 per cent of all heat pumps fell short of our criteria.

I co-founded Quiet Mark 15 years ago with my mother, Gloria, continuing the work of my grandfather, John Connell, who started the Noise Abatement Society in 1959 and lobbied parliament to classify noise as a statutory nuisance in 1960. We have built market-wide databases and scrutinise manufacturers' claims on sound levels using standardised tests, from which we certify the models with the lowest noise levels. We take into account acoustic performance versus the kW output of each heat pump.

A heat pump emits less carbon dioxide (and usually also less noise) than a boiler to warm your home — many of them can also cool rooms in a heatwave. Properly installed, an air source heat pump should be no more noisy than a fridge or moderate rainfall, ranging between 40 and 60 decibels (dB).

In our survey, 57 per cent of people said independent noise certification would increase trust if they bought a heat pump, so here is Quiet Mark's pick of 14 super-quiet models.

Our price guides are a baseline for the heat pump only. It excludes costs such as installation and bigger radiators.

Best for flats and smaller homes

Daikin 4 Port Multi+Split Air Conditioner 6.8kW
£1,923 for outdoor unit only
Can heat and cool up to three rooms and supply hot water through one system. It connects up to three individually controlled indoor units and a 120-litre hot water tank to one outdoor unit, which provides both 5.2kW cooling and 6.8kW heating.

Trianco Activair Pro 6kW *£4,336*
Designed to help owners of small to medium-sized homes switch to more sustainable heating. It is also available in 12kW and 17kW, from a heating supplier with a heritage spanning 165 years.

Grant Aerona 290 6.5kW *£3,339*
A single-fan heat pump unit, ideal for small to medium-sized homes and flats, whether newly built or retrofitted. It is highly efficient with a seven-year guarantee when installed by a G1 installer (G1 is an accreditation scheme).

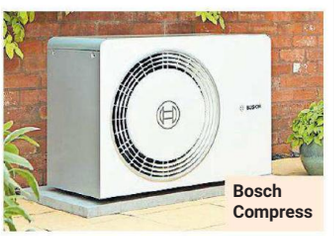
Bosch Compress CS5800i AW 5kW *£3,744*
Built for UK homes. It can run at flow temperatures of up to 75C through your radiators, which enables it to replace a gas boiler in a leaky home. Super-quiet yet efficient, it promises an easy installation.

Trianco Activair Pro

Best for medium-sized homes

Panasonic Aquarea M Series T-CAP 9kW (WH-WXG09ME8) *£5,276*
Suits medium-sized family homes, especially those that switch from a gas or oil boiler to a heat pump. It can work effectively with existing radiators, is exceptionally quiet, and offers optional cooling for year-round comfort.

Vaillant aroTHERM 7kW *£4,039*
Best for homes with limited space. The improved model has a feature called "flexible space function", which enables it to be installed closer to doors and windows than other heat pumps, including its predecessor.



Bosch Compress

Windhager AeroWIN Deluxe 2.6 — 7kW *£13,103 including control, distribution for first heating circuit and remote access*
Offers active heating and cooling as well as "silent" mode and an intuitive touch-screen control interface with remote access.

Insta Group IG6-MP1-A1 *£1,818*
Suits a newly built home with up to four bedrooms, or an older three-bedroom semi. It provides space heating, hot water via a cylinder, and cooling. Cooling is recommended via fan coils, which can both heat and cool through blowing air over a coil of hot (or cold) water.

Mitsubishi Electric Ecodan 8.5kW *£3,452*
Part of a well-known range, which runs from 5kW up to 14kW. Its website has a tool that asks some questions to give an estimate to correctly size a heat pump for your home.

Best for larger properties

LG THERMA V R290 Monobloc 16kW *From £6,420*
Designed for larger homes, less insulated homes, and buildings with traditional radiators requiring a heat pump capable of exceptional performance efficiency to pump water at higher temperatures through the existing system. In hot weather, it can reverse its cycle to provide cooling by circulating chilled water through compatible underfloor pipe systems.

Ideal 10kW Logic Air *£3,589*
Provides efficient heating and fast hot water to larger properties. Paired with the Ideal pre-plumbed and pre-wired cylinders, the Logic Air is one of the easiest heat pump systems to install and, with the Halo Air, one of the easiest to control. The outdoor unit can be sited almost anywhere thanks to its low sound levels and small installation clearances.

Best for retrofitted houses

NIBE S2060-6
From £6,150 for purchases via NIBE Home, including buffer tank, installation and materials, but not radiators
Suits retrofit projects of small to medium-sized homes, or small to large new, low-energy buildings. It uses a natural refrigerant, helping to reduce its impact on the environment, and has built-in wifi and smart technology to adjust the indoor climate from your smartphone.

Midea M Thermal Nature Plus Series 8kW *£3,400*
Can run at high temperatures and is fully compatible with traditional radiators, significantly reducing renovation costs. An ideal solution for space-constrained and time-sensitive renovation projects.

Solax 5kW Alture series *From £3,250*
Suitable for small older homes, or a medium-sized newer home, dependent on heat loss. It delivers efficient low-temperature heating, domestic hot water, and can cool (where compatible emitters are installed). Integration with SolaX inverters, batteries, EV chargers and the X-Hub intelligent energy management system means you can have an entire ecosystem under one simple app control.
Poppy Szkiler is the CEO of Quiet Mark

We split up but didn't move out

Cate St Hill is no longer with her husband, but they still live together and have birthday parties and 'pizza Fridays' — to give their five-year-old daughter a secure home

When I was three years old my mum — a single mother in the late 1980s — called my father and asked him: "What do you want to do? She's started asking about you." His response: "She can come and find me when she's 18." And that's exactly what I did, meeting him a handful of times before false assurances turned into broken promises. He didn't contribute so much as a penny and I was always left with this big question mark.

I learnt from a young age that marriage, and a mother and father who stayed together for ever, was the stuff of fairytales. I understood that people *choose* to be parents, through love, not necessarily as a result of genes. I do have a father figure, albeit an unexpected one: a godfather who, while not romantically involved with my mother, has been the positive role model who has helped to make me who I am today. My view of family is not limited to the traditional unit — it is more fluid than that. What matters is who shows up.

I was always hoping for a much less complicated story for my daughter. So it is in a surprising twist of fate that I find myself in the slightly unconventional situation where I still live with my ex-husband — that is, divorce pending. This is entirely by choice, even if it is not what I would have dreamt of choosing for myself.

We separated amicably three years ago when my daughter was two and a half, ending a 12-year relationship without dramatic fanfare. There wasn't one big moment that broke us apart — although to be honest, a renovation never really helps. We simply stopped communicating until a fissure slowly opened between us and we found that we had drifted so far apart there was no way to glue us back together again. We essentially became flatmates — two passing ships in the night — and in many ways we still are, albeit much happier versions of ourselves. Because we now co-parent and cohabit amicably side by side in the same family home in southeast London.

This is what is called "nesting", a co-parenting arrangement where the child stays in one place — the family home remaining a secure base — while the adults come and go as needed. It creates stability and continuity for the child — they don't have the feeling of constant coming and going, and it offers a slower, more gentle way to ease a family into separate lives. Three years on, and we've settled into a rhythm that feels surprisingly normal, even if it is still met with curiosity from friends and family.

My ex splits his time between London and Paris, one week here, one week there. When he is in the house, so am I. We have separate bedrooms at opposite ends of the house, but we share meals together and make sure to spend time as a family. We have pizza Fridays, we'll do the occasional school pick-up together, and if it is one of our birthdays we'll have a little celebration just the three of us.

The thing is, we still see ourselves as a family unit, even if we're no longer a couple. We didn't feel that an ending to our romantic relationship had to mean an ending for our family. We broke one vow, but we are still tied together into a lifetime of parenting, so we may as well make it as pain-free as we can. Not just for our daughter but for ourselves.

Cate St Hill with her daughter at home, where she still lives, while her ex spends alternate weeks there

We met in our early twenties. I was fresh out of architecture school, he had been in London for a month. It wasn't quite how I expected love to feel, but he was French and impossibly romantic, arriving on our first date with a box of macarons. My mum walked me down the aisle, my godfather gave the speech. In 2016 we bought our first home, an unloved Victorian terraced house in Herne Hill that gave off the distinct vibe of "worst house on the best street". It had an awkward layout with the only bathroom on the ground floor, separated from the two bedrooms upstairs.

After five years living with a freezing cold, draughty bathroom and a resident

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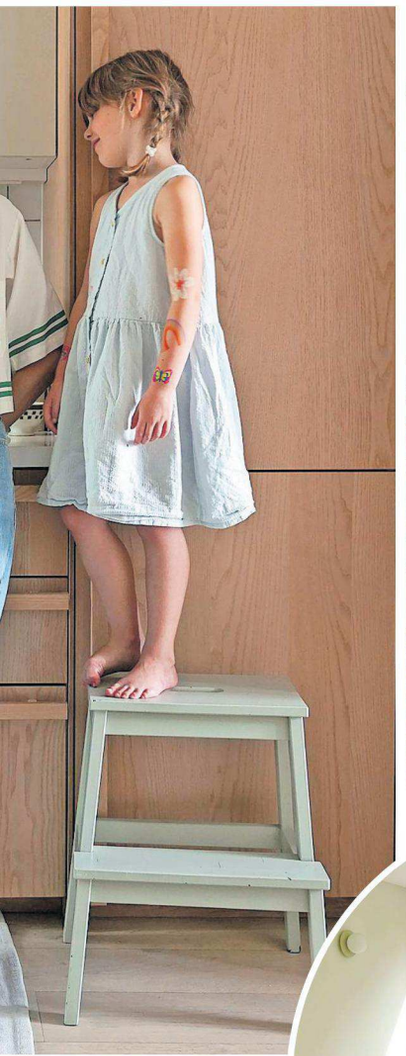
PHOTOS COURTESY OF CATE ST HILL



family of mice we remortgaged and received planning permission for a double-storey extension in 2021, just as I was about to go into labour with our daughter. During a six-month build we opened up the downstairs into the side return and moved the bathroom to where it belonged, adding a bedroom in the process. I had always dreamt of building my own house, so I poured myself into tile choices and paint colours, joinery details and project managing the whole thing, to pretty nonplussed shrugs from my husband. Just as I was starting to settle into the new space, the paint hardly dry, our marriage ended.

When we decided to separate I couldn't find examples or information on nesting. I just knew we had to do things differently. As an interior designer my whole life is concerned with the home — my home is my work and my work is my home. So what if I could find a way to keep the very thing that means the most to me?

When you divorce the first question you ask yourselves is: "Where are we going to live?" Instead of thinking about what we "should" do we started considering what would actually work for us. He didn't want to be a weekend dad, I didn't wish to repeat the past. With my ex spending more time in France, it didn't make sense to have two places in an expensive city such as London. I wouldn't be able to afford a house half as nice or half as big on my own, and we didn't want our daughter to have to go from hotel to hotel when he was here. We both pay the mortgage and split the bills.

> When he leaves the loo seat up or the sink is piled with dishes I find myself tearing my hair out

Of course, it's not ideal living with your ex, especially when you are trying to date and move on with your life. When he leaves the loo seat up or the sink is piled up with dishes I find myself inwardly despairing and tearing my hair out. But on balance it's a compromise I have to make, for my daughter to have the present father I never had and always dreamt about. She will never remember us hugging or being romantic with one another, but she will never have seen us argue or fight. It is important for her to see us united. We put our egos quietly to one side and try to minimise conflict. We're flexible and open-minded — if one of us forgets to put something in the diary it's not a big deal; if plans change at the last minute we can always work it out.

My daughter is five, and understands we're not together. It all seems entirely normal to her and I'm confident there is no harm done — she's happy, content and constantly smiling. The other week she said to me: "Papa has a girlfriend and lots of friends, maybe he can help you to find a boyfriend, maybe we can all go out and look together." We're all one big family. There is no division of yours and mine, my week v your week. It is an expanding of her world, not a constriction.

When Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin "consciously uncoupled" they were publicly mocked — the idea seemed as silly as bathing in chia seeds. But maybe it's not such a bad idea to parent with a friend. I learnt that by example. We seem to have conflated parenting with romance to such an extent that the couple loses itself within the family or you lose the family when the couple breaks apart. There's another way to do things that doesn't need to result in a lose-lose situation.

On breaking up I remember my ex saying to me, "But I thought we were going to grow old together," and I responded, "We still will, just as parents." We're not a broken family, we're a different kind of family, one that's a bit messy and, yes, a little unconventional, but united in bringing up a child as best we can. For us it's not an ending but the closing of one chapter and the start of another — a rewriting of what's possible. We didn't fail. In fact, I think we're succeeding in making it work.

Cate St Hill is an interiors writer and design consultant based in southeast London. You can read her Substack at catesthill.substack.com or follow her on Instagram @catesthill

Rental Health

Sasha Nugara, Property Reporter

Our landlord won't let us choose our new flatmate

From dodgy landlords to housemate dramas, our columnist answers your questions

Q I share a flat with two other girls and we get on really well. Unfortunately one of them is moving out to live with her boyfriend, so we need another person to fill her room.

We wanted to advertise it on SpareRoom or a Facebook page and do the interviews ourselves, but the landlord said he wanted to do it without us being involved.

We're a really close-knit houseshare and I'm keen to keep a similar dynamic. We're always hanging out in the living room and we share one bathroom. I'm a bit of a clean freak and we've always maintained a really tidy house. Do we have any sway or right to protest?

A Landlords approach replacing tenants in various ways, but it's important for them to remember who lives in the house — not just who owns it.

My Clapham landlord got it exactly right. He would ask us all which evenings we were free and line up a night or two of interviews: 15-minute slots, 30 minutes apart. It was perfect because not only did we miss out on the admin of advertising the room and sifting through replies but he was able to vet our chosen tenant.

It was a house of four girls and he understood how important it was to keep the peace. We'd had a couple of early departures over the years because of lifestyle clashes, and looking for a new tenant made work for everyone.

Your home is meant to be your sanctuary, so I don't blame you for wanting at least a heads-up on who your next housemate will be. I've found that the closer your landlord is to the process the more they tend to care. My worst moves have been handled by minimal-effort letting agents without me being given more than a sentence on the make-up of the household. It once took me a week to realise I was living in a house with four men and no other women, and I don't fancy finding myself in that situation again.

I asked Matt Hutchinson, director of the flatshare site SpareRoom, for his advice. "Under the new Renters' Rights Act some landlords have shifted away from joint tenancies and towards renting by the room, partly to avoid void periods," Hutchinson explains. "This is because, from May 1, 2026, if one person in a joint tenancy wishes to leave and gives notice, it ends the tenancy for all the tenants.

"In your case it sounds like your housemate has left and ended their own contract, which means your landlord has the right to fill the room himself. However, this comes with a risk of its own: that if you don't like the new housemate, you could end up leaving too.

"The ideal situation for landlords is low turnover and no void periods. It could be worth giving your landlord a call and having a conversation with him. It's most likely the case that he cannot afford to wait around while you look for the perfect person. He needs that room filled as fast as possible.

"So if you can reassure him that you're aware speed is of the utmost importance to him and stress the need to find a housemate who is the right fit so you can carry on living happily there for the foreseeable future, he might be more likely to allow you to find the replacement housemate yourselves."

Sadly you don't have any legal right to choose your replacement tenant, but it's definitely worth pushing the conversation with your landlord. And if you've been a good, reliable tenant I can't see why he would not give you a final say — especially if the change in dynamic is making you consider leaving yourself. Your landlord can no longer serve a section 21 no-fault eviction, so no need to worry about backlash for standing up for yourself.

You can now give two months' notice whenever you want to leave your tenancy. So if your landlord ends up recruiting a nightmare tenant, it may be time for you and your friend to look for a new place.

Sign up to our property newsletter for the latest analysis, gossip, tips and tricks every Tuesday at thetimes.com/newsletters

Got a query? Email sasha.nugara@the-times.co.uk

AKIRA SUEMORI FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES;CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

'The flats I bought as my pension are worthless'

After the death of her husband, Diana Odell, 74, bought three properties to fund her retirement. Now, a quirk in post-Grenfell safety laws means she has to continue working

I thought I'd planned for retirement, and done the best for me and my kids [*says Diana Odell, 74*]. But now I'm living in fear. I never thought I'd be in this position. In January 2000 I was living in Hertfordshire — married with two children and working part-time.

I had been married almost 20 years. But then my husband was killed in an accident when he was 48. It was a shock. I was 47, and left to bring up two children alone. I'd gone back to university at 35 and qualified as a psychotherapist, but I was self-employed and trying to build up a practice. I didn't have a career, or a pension. I didn't have a mortgage on the house, which was lucky, but I had a daughter about to go to university and one still in school. It was a horrible time.

When my husband died, there was life insurance money. At the time, the government was encouraging people to sort out their own pension. I thought that using his life insurance to buy three flats would provide some income and a future pension for me.

In 2003 and 2004 I bought two new-build flats in Manchester — a one-bedroom for about £100,000 and a two-bedroom for £217,000. And I bought a one-bedroom refurbished flat in Nottingham for about £100,000. I had a mortgage of nearly £200,000 on the two-bedroom Manchester flat, which I'm still paying. The idea was to have an income to raise the girls and when I retired, I'd sell them and live off the proceeds.

Then in 2017 Grenfell happened. [The fire claimed 72 lives in a west London tower and exposed fire risks in flats across Britain.] That was around the time I was looking to retire. I found out I couldn't sell any of the flats, because of cladding and safety issues. I was horrified. Luckily, in all three cases, the developers eventually stepped up. The flats are being repaired. So my position is nowhere near as bad as many people.

I'm losing money each month on one flat — the rent isn't enough to cover the mortgage and the service charges, which have almost doubled over the last few years. And I'm making a little profit on the others.

My problem is different: even though my flats are finally being remediated, nobody will buy them. All are considered to be worth £0 as

> As a non-qualifying leaseholder, there is no legal cap on my costs

the government has labelled me a "non-qualifying leaseholder".

Let me explain. In 2020 the government created a building fund to help leaseholders pay for cladding remediation. But in 2022 the government decided — presumably because the fund wasn't big enough to pay for everybody — to make different levels of leaseholder: qualifying and non-qualifying. The idea was really to help people who lived in their own homes, as opposed to corporate landlords. So if you owned three properties, as well as the property you lived in, you were deemed to be a non-qualifying leaseholder — that means that the leaseholder is deemed by the government to be responsible, in perpetuity, for any costs to remediate buildings due to historic fire-safety defects.

Qualifying leaseholders are legally protected — they pay no costs to fix cladding, and a capped amount (usually £10,000) for other fire risks. As a non-qualifying leaseholder, there is no legal cap on my costs. If a fire-safety defect is found in the future, the building owner can send me a bill for an unlimited amount — £50,000, £100,000 or more — and I'm legally obligated to pay it.

This onerous condition is effectively attached to the title of the property, thereby rendering it unsaleable. So even though my flats are now being remediated, when all the building work is done, if I want to sell, that designation of non-qualifying stays with the property lease. So any buyer is liable to repair any historic fire safety defects found at any time in the future.

No one will want to buy a property with this risk. They're unsaleable, except to cash buyers at a drastically reduced price. Estate agents and solicitors have told me they won't handle property sales for a non-qualifying leaseholder.

It's completely illogical and unfair. All leaseholders bought their properties in good faith. And yet some manufacturers lied and sold materials they knew were unsafe, many developers cut corners and broke rules, and the government did not fix faulty rules or poor inspections — they are the ones to blame.

The government is trying to cover itself against future claims. But on any building they could find something in the future. The title to my property is effectively being changed after the fact, which doesn't even seem legal to me.

Also, if the developer has paid for my remediation to be done, why have a non-qualifying status attached to the property? You'd think the risk would be less for those buildings. So that's illogical.

My aim wasn't to make lots of money. It was for a pension. I thought I'd be retired by now but I'm still working. I remarried in 2005, but my husband is 79 and retired on a pension. We're too old to get mortgages. The developers on my flats may be repairing them now, but if the inspector who signs it off finds stuff that is still unsafe — no firebreaks for instance — I could be liable for those repairs. I'm living in fear of a bill for thousands. And I can't sell any of the flats. I'm worried that my children will inherit this problem when I die.

I realise I'm lucky. My house has no mortgage on it. But if I need money to retire, I'd have to do equity release. I don't know if I can afford new windows in our house. We just paid £2,000 to get our car fixed, but when that goes, can I afford another car? I have to keep working in case I have to ramp it up.

One solution would be to change the rules so when the property is sold, if the buyer doesn't own three flats and a home, they can become qualifying. So non-qualifying ends with the sale of the property. I also think they should get rid of the different levels of leaseholders.

When Labour was in opposition it declared that all leaseholders are innocent. Now it is in power, it has evidently concurred with the Tories that some leaseholders are more innocent than others. We have high hopes for Andy Burnham. He is a supporter of our cause. So there's a tiny glimmer of hope. On the other hand, we've seen that once you get in government, your promises don't necessarily come to fruition.

For the past ten years it's been a constant worry. Mainly I feel let down. You think you're planning for your pension and then you're blamed for something that is not your fault. I thought I was doing the right thing.

Interview by Hugh Graham

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